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THE

NATURE, &c.

OF THE

ATONEMENT

THE

NATURE,

REALITY, AND EFFICACY

OF THE

ATONEMENT.

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PREFACE.

WHATEVER opinion may be entertained concerning the manner in which the subject of this volume is discussed, few will deny its infinite importance. Its bearing on the other doctrines of Christianity, and on the practice of its duties; its influence on the hopes, and on the consolations of man;—lead most justly the great majority of professing Christians to consider it as the foundation of the System of Divine Truth. The denial of the Atonement, they reckon to be a virtual renunciation of Christianity; a relinquishment of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

That Christ suffered and died as an atonement for the sins of mankind, is a doctrine so constantly and so strongly enforced through every part of the New Testament, that whoever will seriously peruse those writings, and deny that it is there, may, with as much reason and truth, after reading the works of Thucydides and Livy, assert, that in them no mention is made of any facts relative to the histories of Greece and Rome.*

My object, in the composition of this volume, has been to furnish the Christian student with a comprehensive and connected Work on the Atonement. The very valuable

* Soame Jenyn's Internal Evidence, p. 29.

Discourses of Archbishop Magee, and of Dr. J. P. Smith, on this subject, are deservedly held in high estimation. But without instituting a comparison, the reader will observe, that I have pursued a different course; and that this work, whatever may be its merits or defects, is intended to be a complete treatise on the Atonement.

The elucidations which are given of other topics closely allied to this, I considered to be necessary to the accomplishment of my design. It will be found, accordingly, that I have discussed at considerable length the nature and origin of sacrifice, the design of typical institutions, the justice of God, and the priesthood of Christ.

In consequence of the controversy that has been agitated respecting the humanity of our Lord, I have appropriated a chapter to the consideration of his perfect holiness. His immaculate purity is necessarily referred to in other parts of the Work.

Glasgow, December 15th, 1830.

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

Page

ON THE ORIGIN OF SACRIFICE: AND ON THE INFORMATION TO BE OBTAINED CONCERNING THE ATONEMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAP. I.

On the Origin and Nature of Sacrifice:—The different theories which are entertained on the subject:—Objections to its Divine Institution, answered. . 1

CHAP. II.

On the Nature and Use of Types and Symbols:—the Ancient Sacrifices intended to be symbolical representations of the Sacrifice of Christ.—The Sacrifice of Christ designed in the purpose of God from everlasting.—The sacrificial terms of the ceremonial ritual are, in their most comprehensive signification, applicable to the death of Christ. 16

CHAP. III.

On the Sacrifices of the Patriarchal Dispensation: the first promise connected with the institution of Sacrifice.—The Sacrifice of Abel and of Cain:—Of Noah:—Of Abraham:—the nature of that covenant which was ratified by the Sacrifice which he offered:—the offering up of his son Isaac;—a striking prefiguration of the sacrifice of the Redeemer.—Isaac, Jacob, and the Pa-

Page

triarchs, generally worshipped God by sacrifice.—The divine origin of sacrifice inferred. . . . 30

Chap. IV.

On the sacrifices mentioned in the book of Job.—The expression of his confidence in the coming Redeemer. 55

Chap. V.

The divine origin of expiatory sacrifice during the patriarchal age proved from its universal prevalence throughout the heathen world. 64

Chap. VI.

On the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation. . . 66

Sect. 1. On the purposes this dispensation was intended to accomplish.—The sacrifices of the Levitical ritual not of human, but of divine origin. ib.

Sect. 2. The sacrifices of the law were propitiatory: guilt was expiated; purification and consecration followed as consequences:—the annual atonement—the passover. 77

Sect. 3. The circumstances which accompanied the offering of propitiatory sacrifice.—The imposition of the hands of the offerer on the head of the victim.—The substitution of the piacular victim in room of the actual transgressor. . 91

Sect. 4. On the provision made by the sacrifices of the law for the purification of the worshipper. 105

Sect. 5. On the different sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation. 111

Chap. VII.

On the express testimony of the scriptures of the Old Testament to the reality and efficacy of the sacrifice of the Redeemer. 119

Page

Sect. 1. The first promise, Gen. iii. 15; and Psal. xl. and cx. 119

Sect. 2. The propitiatory nature of Christ's sufferings shown from the 53d chap. of Isaiah, ver. 1—7. 135

Sect. 3. Isaiah liii. ver. 7.—The infinite evil of sin:—the sufferings of Christ designed for its expiation.—The completeness of his atonement. . 153

Sect. 4. On Daniel ix. 24—27; Zech. xiii. 7.—The conclusion. 165

CHAP. VIII.

Recapitulation. 176

BOOK II.

ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

The nature and origin of the priestly office.—Its nature and origin shown from Heb. v. 1—8. . . 185

CHAP. II.

On the qualifications of Christ for the priestly office—divine appointment:—Union of the divine and human nature:—Personal experience of suffering:—Consecration to the office:—His priesthood, consequently, real and efficacious. 195

CHAP. III.

The perfect purity of Christ as a priest:—His obedience to the whole law:—The necessity of his perfect holiness and obedience. 210

CHAP. IV.

Page

The excellency of Christ's priesthood:—arising from the dignity of his person:—the moral perfection of his character:—the reality of his sacrifice:—the prevalence and perpetuity of his intercession:—the stability of the covenant of which he is Mediator:—the glorious purposes which it is designed to attain:—it is unrivalled and alone. 225

BOOK III.

ON THE ATONEMENT.

CHAP. I.

The substitution of Christ. 253

CHAP. II.

The justice of God in the substitution of Christ. . 269

CHAP. III.

On the satisfaction which Christ rendered to divine justice:—the punishment due to the sins of men inflicted upon him:—He suffered the wrath of God by enduring its effects. 276

CHAP. IV.

The death of Christ proved to have been a satisfaction to divine justice, and an atonement for sin:—from his having actually suffered:—from a consideration of the terms in which his sufferings are expressed in scripture:—from the nature of his sufferings. . . 287

CHAP. V.

The sacrifice of Christ considered as the ransom price of human redemption:—the peculiar nature of the redemp-

Page

tion purchased by Christ:—It was effected by his blood:—The light in which sin is represented in scripture:—redemption by Christ not metaphorical, but real:—the nature and causes of that bondage in which mankind are naturally held:—the price of our redemption paid to God:—its reality proved by the terms in which his work and office are described:—uniformly attributed to the death of Christ. 298

Chap. VI.

On the sacrifice of Christ as the procuring cause of our reconciliation to God:—the effects of his sacrifice, are the removal of the divine wrath:—the reality of the love of God to mankind no objection to this view of the reconciliation effected by the sacrifice of Christ:—The love of God the origin of human redemption:—But God is righteous as well as gracious and merciful:—the peculiar acceptation of the terms reconcile and reconciliation in scripture:—Some of the passages of the New Testament in which the terms occur.—Actual reconciliation to God presupposes that it is mutual. . . . 323

Chap. VII.

On the infinite merit which the scriptures ascribe to the sacrifice of Christ:—On the union of his obedience and suffering in constituting an efficacious atonement—as the ground of pardon—and of justification:—the blessings included in the salvation of Christ inseparably conjoined. 345

Chap. VIII.

On the infinite value and efficacy of the atonement:—the circumstances which render it infinitely valuable:—the voluntariness of Christ in his suffering:—perfect purity:—the dignity of his person:—the complete satisfaction

Page

which he gave to the offended law and government of God:—the results of the atonement in regard to himself:—in reference to us. 365

Chap. IX.

The extent of the atonement:—different views entertained on this subject:—The doctrine of universal pardon. 383

Chap. X.

The reality of the atonement shown—from the reality of his priesthood:—the divine origin of sacrifice:—the nature of the divine justice:—the terms in which the scriptures mention the love of God in the gift of his Son:—in which they speak of the love and condescension of Christ:—in which the character of Christ is represented as the only and the all-sufficient Saviour:—the grounds on which he claims the love and obedience of mankind:—the retrospective and prospective efficacy ascribed to his atonement. 400

Chap. XI.

The reality of the atonement proved by a consideration of the Saviour's agony in the garden of Gethsemane:—his sufferings on that occasion could not have arisen from ordinary causes. 419

Chap. XII.

Objections to the doctrine of the atonement:—alleged to have been unnecessary:—opposed to our views of the benevolence of God:—the impossibility of an innocent person's bearing the punishment due to the guilty:—no discoverable connexion between the sufferings of one being and the forgiveness of another:—scarcely any thing said concerning the atonement by our Lord himself:—the Bible speaks slightingly of sacrifice, and gives the

Page

preference to obedience:—the scripture doctrine of atonement inconsistent with the modern opinion of the magnitude of the creation:—the obedience, prayers, and praises, of Christians are called sacrifices. . . 439

BOOK IV.

THE REASONABLENESS, NECESSITY, AND PRACTICAL TENDENCY, OF THE ATONEMENT.

Chap. I.

The atonement accordant with the reason and moral feelings of man.—The doctrine of vicarious suffering familiar to mankind:—consistent with the natural sentiments of men that benefits should be conferred on the unworthy when related to persons of distinguished merit:—The notion of the expiatory efficacy of sacrifice universal:—The doctrine of atonement adapted to the necessities of man, and calculated to attain his moral improvement. 463

Chap. II.

The atonement worthy of the character and moral government of God:—The divine attributes gloriously manifested:—The unalterable authority and obligation of his law:—The evil and demerit of sin:—The atonement establishes the unchangeableness of the principles of moral obligation:—Opposed alike to the Socinian, the Arminian, and the Antinomian, hypotheses. . 477

Chap. III.

The necessity of the atonement:—shewn from the fact, that it has been made and accepted:—that it was required in order to the manifestation and exercise of re-

Page

deeming love and mercy:—to satisfy the justice of God in consideration of the greatness of the blessings which God had designed to bestow on mankind. . . 490

CHAP. IV.

The practical tendency of the atonement:—Faith in it is accompanied by a conviction of the excellency and authority of the law:—The gospel does not mitigate the requirements of the law as a rule of life:—On the contrary, it presupposes the unalterable obligation of the law:—It establishes its commanding authority of the law over the heart and conscience:—It only effectually provides for the renovation and holiness of man. . 520

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THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

BOOK I.

ON THE ORIGIN OF SACRIFICE:

AND ON

THE INFORMATION TO BE OBTAINED

CONCERNING THE

ATONEMENT FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAP. I.

ON THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SACRIFICE.

THE kindness with which God adapts the dispensations of his mercy to the varying circumstances of mankind, while it claims our gratitude and admiration, is a proof of his manifold wisdom. These dispensations have been accommodated to the infancy, the youth, and the mature age of the human race: divine knowledge has been conveyed in the mode and in the measure most suited to the actual condition of man. But while they have been wisely varied in

external form, the doctrines revealed, the blessings communicated, and the designs attained, have always been in substance the same. It was the plan of redeeming mercy which was obscurely intimated in the first promise, signified by the first sacrifices, and taught by typical institutions, which is now clearly made known unto us in the gospel. The sum of all the dispensations was the Redeemer in his meditorial offices, in his atoning death, as the way, and the truth and the life, through whom alone sinful men can have access to God. He was the end, and the fulfilment of the law; to whom all the prophets bore witness: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

There are important reasons in favour of a gradual unfolding to sinful men of the plan of redemption. It is analogous to the ordinary procedure of God, whose purposes, at least, in so far as they relate to this world, are developed and brought to maturity gradually. In the vegetable world the sowing of the seed, the sunshine and the shower, precede the harvest: the conversion of the wilderness into a fruitful field is accomplished by a laborious and progressive process in proportion to the perfection and durability of any work is the time required for its execution. The beautiful mechanism of a well-regulated society, so closely connected with the dignity and happiness of man, and the easy and unincumbered movements of which every reflecting mind must admire, is the slow-

est of coming to perfection of all human productions; and it combines, in the finished form which it ultimately assumes, the united wisdom and patriotism of many generations. Thus it is also with all the most useful as well as the most splendid endowments of man. When we are charmed with the eloquence that moves and wins a multitude to the accomplishment of its purpose, we are delighted with the effect which is produced, and the apparent ease with which it is attained; and in the warmth of our admiration we are prone to regard the powers with which the orator is gifted, as belonging to a being of a superior order: but the individual who possesses such an intellectual superiority over his fellows, was once a helpless infant, and has arisen to his present elevation through a protracted course of moral discipline and laborious application; and those acquirements which we admire, and which he employs with so much facility, are the result of persevering and long-sustained exertion.

But we can assign other reasons for the gradual manner in which the plan of redemption was revealed. In this way the insufficiency of reason, and the actua condition of man as a sinner, have been fully shown. It is thus incontrovertibly proved, that he is alienated from God, and a transgressor of his law. In this way also the proof that his salvation is all of free and sovereign grace, and that it has been accomplished without his aid or solicitation, is more manifest and

striking. For when the world, by its wisdom, knew not God, and when by the lapse of ages and generations it was proved that its pretended wisdom only involved it in greater darkness, it pleased God to interpose, and to announce his character and will by the ministry of his own Son. It was meet that the manifestation of this Divine Person should take place at a period of the world illustrative of its indispensable necessity, and of the riches of the mercy and grace of God. It was befitting the magnitude and glory of a work which is represented as having occupied a distinguished part in the eternal counsels of God, and in subserviency to which all things were formed and sustained, that it should take place at a time when its infinite importance and design, might be most apparent. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

When the reality of Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin, and the infinite value of his atonement, are admitted, the conclusion to which we must come respecting the origin of sacrifice is, that it is of divine institution. It was to prefigure this, a work of transcendent importance, that typical sacrifices were appointed; and in place of considering the Christian atonement as an accommodation to Jewish prejudices, or as deriving its character from the sacrificial rites which had been

previously and generally practised by mankind, we are to regard these as receiving their nature from, and conveying the notion belonging to, the only and proper sacrifice for sin. Accordingly, the definition of sacrifice for sin is, an institution appointed by God to expiate the guilt of sin in such a manner as to avert the punishment of it from the offender.

To prevent misconception, I repeat, that by sacrifice is meant, an institution in which death is solemnly inflicted on a living creature by effusion of its blood, as an act of religious homage and worship to God, in acknowledgment of sin and its desert, for the purpose of making satisfaction to the divine justice for the wrong which has been done, and of appeasing and averting merited wrath.

In inquiring into the origin of sacrifice an error has very generally prevailed. "The nature of sacrifice, as generally practised and understood, antecedent to the time of Christ, has been first examined; and from that, as a ground of explanation, the notion of Christ's sacrifice has been derived; whereas, in fact, by this, all former sacrifices are to be interpreted; and in reference to it only, can they be understood. From an error so fundamental, it is not wonderful, that the greatest perplexities should have arisen, concerning the nature of sacrifice in general; and that they should ultimately fall, with cumulative confusion, on the nature of that particular sacrifice, to the investigation

of which, fanciful and mistaken theories had been assumed as guides. Thus, whilst some have presumptuously attributed, the early and universal practice of sacrifice, to an irrational and superstitious fear of an imagined sanguinary divinity; and have been led, in defiance of the express language of Revelation, to reject and ridicule the notion of sacrifice, as originating only in the grossness of superstition: others, not equally destitute of reverence for the sacred word, and consequently not treating this solemn Rite, with equal disrespect, have yet ascribed its origin to human invention; and have thereby been compelled to account for the divine institution of the Jewish sacrifices, as a mere accommodation to prevailing practice; and consequently to admit even the sacrifice of Christ itself, to have grown out of, and been adapted to, this creature of human excogitation.

Of this latter class, the theories, as might be expected, are various. In one, sacrifices are represented in the light of gifts, intended to soothe and appease the Supreme Being, in like manner as they are found to conciliate the favour of men: in another they are considered as federal rites, a kind of eating and drinking with God, as it were at his table, and thereby implying the being restored to a state of friendship with him, by repentance and confession of sins; in a third, they are described as but symbolical actions, or a more expressive language, denoting the gratitude of the

offerer, in such as are eucharistical; and in those that are expiatory, the acknowledgment of, and contrition for sin, strongly expressed by the death of the animal, representing that death, which the offerer confessed to be his own desert." *

The first of these theories was held by Spencer, the second by Sykes, and the third by Warburton. The fact of Abel's sacrifice, as the distinguished writer whom I have just quoted observes, seems inconsistent with the first, inasmuch as it must have been antecedent to those distinctions of property, on which alone experience of the effects of gifts upon men could have been founded: with the second, inasmuch as it took place several ages prior to that period, at which both the words of Scripture, and the opinions of the wisest commentators, have fixed the permission of animal food to man.

That sacrifice was of divine origin, is a position which may be fully established.

It appears to me surprising that any one who reflects on the evidence by which this position is proved, can entertain any doubt concerning it. How otherwise can the universality of the practice among all Pagan nations be accounted for? Can we suppose that a custom not founded in nature, or in the reason of things, could have prevailed over the world, among barbarous and civilized nations, often insulated and uncon-

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 42.

nected with each other, without being derived from revelation? "Whatever practice has obtained universally in the world, must have obtained from some dictate of reason, or some demand of nature, or some principle of interest, or else from some powerful influence or injunction of some being of universal authority. Now the practice of animal sacrifice did not obtain from reason; for no reasonable notions of God could teach them, that he could delight in blood, or in the fat of slain beasts. Nor will any man say, that we have any natural instinct to gratify, in spilling the blood of an innocent creature. Nor could there be any temptation from appetite to do this in those ages, when the whole sacrifice was consumed by fire; or when, if it was not, yet men wholly abstained from flesh; and consequently this practice did not owe its origin to any principle of interest. Nay, so far from any thing of this, that the destruction of innocent and useful creatures is evidently against nature, against reason, and against interest: and therefore must be founded in an authority, whose influence was as powerful, as the practice was universal; and that could be none, but the authority of God the Sovereign of the world. If it be said of Adam, the question still remains what motive could determine him to the practice? It could not be nature, reason, or interest, as has been already shown; it must therefore have been the authority of his Sovereign: and had Adam enjoined it to his pos-

terity, it is not to be imagined, that they would have obeyed him in so expensive and extraordinary a rite, from any other motive than the command of God. If it be urged that superstitions prevail unaccountably in the world; it may be answered, that all superstition has its origin in true religion: all superstition is an abuse: and all abuse supposes a right and proper use. And if this be the case in superstitious practices that are of lesser moment and extent, what shall be said of a practice existing through all ages, and pervading every nation."*

The same notion of the efficacy of sacrifice in averting the displeasure of the offended Deity, and in procuring pardon and reconciliation, has prevailed as widely as the practice of this rite. The notion was entertained by all nations, and continues to be entertained wherever the light of Christianity is not enjoyed. The doctrine of sacrifice, as transmitted by tradition, was, indeed, greatly corrupted in the heathen world; but the universality of the rite, accompanied as it was with the idea of propitiation, can only be accounted for on the supposition of the divine origin of the institution.

This conclusion will appear to be strengthened when it is considered, that there is no discoverable connexion between the slaying of an animal as a sacrifice offered to the Deity, and the end sought to be obtained

* See Kennicot's Two Dis. pp. 210, 211.

by it, the forgiveness of sins. For though the consciousness of guilt and the dread of punishment, have led all nations to adhere to this mode, taught them by tradition, of expiating it ;* it is not conceivable that unaided reason would give rise to the invention. It would seem to the human mind, on the contrary, that an offering of the fruits of the earth, presented as an expression of homage to the Supreme Being, would be more agreeable to a pure and benevolent Deity. Accordingly, philosophers generally in the heathen world regarded the rite of sacrifice as a superstitious observance, the reasonableness and utility of which they could not perceive.

I shall not here anticipate considerations which will be adduced in the following chapters, by which the divine origin of sacrifice will be fully established.

The principal objections to the supposition of the divine institution of sacrifice are; I. The silence of the sacred historian on this head: and, II. That there are passages in scripture in which God seems openly to disown the institution of sacrifice.

Bishop Warburton urges the first of these objections: "The two capital observances," says he, "in the Jewish ritual, were the sabbath, and sacrifices. To impress the highest reverence and veneration on the sabbath, the sacred historian is careful to record its divine original: and can we suppose that, had sacrifice had

* See Chap. i. Book iii.

the same original, he would have neglected to establish this truth, at the time that he recorded the other, since it is of equal use, and of equal importance; I should have said, indeed, of much greater?"* Davison and Benson argue against the divine institution of sacrifice on the same ground.

But the objection is utterly futile. It will be shewn in the third chapter of this book, that there are explicit intimations of the observance and the divine acceptance of sacrifice soon after the fall;—such intimations as fully warrant the conclusions deduced from them, that sacrifice was prescribed by God from the beginning to the patriarchs. The divine institution of sacrifice, appears to me to be as clearly established as that of the sabbath. The sacred history explicitly records the continuance of the former from the time of Abel, as practised by men eminently holy, who were the special objects of the favour of God: whereas the sabbath is only noticed two or three times before the giving of the law; and its observance is not in one instance recorded in any of the six books that follow the pentateuch.

It has often been remarked, that the very notoriety of a custom may be a reason, why the historian may omit the mention of its continuance.† Circumcision which was constantly observed by the Israelites is no

* Div. Leg. B. ix. ch. ii. vol. iv. p. 661.

† Dewar's Elements of Mor. Phil. vol. ii. pp. 217—238.

mentioned once in the sacred history as having been practised from the settling of the Israelites in Canaan, down to the circumcision of our blessed Saviour, that is, for a space of one thousand four hundred and fifty years. Hence also the silence of the New Testament concerning the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week: a change which we know was introduced by divine authority, because it was observed by inspired apostles. The patriarchs must have been instructed by God in regard to many things, the time and manner of which are not recorded. At what period was the doctrine of a future state of blessedness made known to them? For it appears from Heb. xi. 13—16. that they lived and died in the faith of a glorious immortality. At what time were they taught the distinction of animals into clean and unclean? For Noah acted upon it as a thing with which he had been familiar.

With regard to the second objection mentioned above as urged against the divine institution of sacrifice, namely, that there are passages in Scripture in which God seems to disown its having been originally appointed by him, a full answer will hereafter be given. (B. ii. ch. xvii.) In the meantime, it may be remarked that the passages in question prove too much, and therefore must go for nothing in the present argument; since they shew, according to this mode of interpreting their meaning, that the Jewish sacrifices had not been

ordained by God, in direct contradiction to the testimony of Moses. But, in truth, they say nothing concerning the origin of sacrifice. They are to be understood as the language of admonition to the Israelites for preferring them before the greater things of the law, the moral acts and dispositions with which sacrificial observances were designed to be connected. When the worshippers "placed their efficacy in the naked rite, as if aught accrued to God thereby; God would no longer own them for any ordinance of his; nor indeed in that disguise put upon them were they."*

It furnishes no inconsiderable evidences in favour of the divine origin of sacrifice that every other supposition is alike irreconcilable with the facts of the case, and with the explicit declarations of scripture. The first of those theories to which I have alluded, namely, that which represents sacrifices in the light of gifts, intended to soothe the Deity, assumes that where the offering was followed by pardon, the object for which it was presented was attained. But the Apostle affirms that the ancient sacrifices could not make a proper atonement for sins; that "the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin." It therefore follows, that something more was demanded to expiate guilt than

* Mede's Works, p. 353.—An enumeration of all the objections to the divine institution of sacrifice, will be found in the last chapter of this Book.

the penitence of the worshipper, indicated by the most costly presents.

The second theory mentioned, according to which sacrifices are viewed as pledges of the restoration of friendship between God and the worshipper, admits that repentance and reformation were sufficient to procure the pardon of sin. The sacrifice was the mere symbol of that reconciliation which was effected by the penitence of the offerer. The blood of bulls and of goats therefore answered all the ends which the offerer of the sacrifice had in view: it procured the forgiveness of sins, or rather it was the pledge that pardon was actually bestowed. But the Apostle affirms that it could not take away sin; that is, that it could not make the atonement required to expiate guilt, and to furnish a ground for its pardon.—Besides, this theory is founded on a false assumption, namely, that the ancient sacrifices were eaten by those who offered them. On the contrary, the whole burnt-offerings presented by the patriarchs, and the sin-offering and trespass-offering of the Levitical ritual, were consumed on the altar. Many of the victims which were sacrificed by the heathen were of a kind which rendered a participation in them by men in civilized life impossible.

The third theory employed to account for the practice of offering animals in sacrifice to God, according to which it is considered as emblematic only of inter-

nal dispositions, and especially of the determination of the offerer to mortify sin, supposes that sacrifices were strong expressions of repentance, and as such that they were perfectly available for procuring pardon. But the Apostle declares that they could not take away sin, whatever might be the penitence of the offerer; consequently that a real atonement was necessary for this end; and that they were only typical of the true sacrifice for sin.

CHAP. II.

ON THE NATURE AND USE OF TYPES AND SYMBOLS: THE ANCIENT SACRIFICES INTENDED TO BE SYMBOLICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

PHILOSOPHERS have very properly defined language to be, all those signs which mankind use in order to communicate to others their thoughts and intentions, their purposes and desires. Some of these signs have a meaning previous to all compact or agreement, which nature teaches every man to understand. The meaning of others is arbitrary, and arises from the conventional signification attached to them by those who use them. Whatever opinion, therefore, is formed regarding the origin of speech, there can be no question that it is natural to man to make use of signs and symbolical action as the means of communicating thought.

In the earlier stages of society, signs of various descriptions are employed to denote things, and they are preferred as a medium of communication to the articulations of the voice, on account of their more forcibly conveying the designed signification. We, indeed, at this advanced period of civilization, may find some difficulty in comprehending the facility with which

mankind in other circumstances, and in early times, understood the intended import of those numerous and various signs which were used in connexion both with civil affairs and with religion, for the purpose of communicating information and instruction.

" A man that rides always in a chariot, by degrees loses the use of his legs; and one who uses artificial signs only, loses both the knowledge and use of the natural. Dumb people retain much more of the natural language than others, because necessity obliges them to use it. And for the same reason, savages have much more of it than civilized nations. Thus, writing is less expressive than reading, and reading less expressive than speaking without book: speaking, without the proper and natural modulations, force, and variations of the voice, is a frigid and dead language, compared with that which is attended with them; it is still more expressive when we add the language of the eyes and features; and it is then only in its perfect and natural state, and attended with its proper energy, when to all these we superadd the force of action. Artificial signs signify, but they do not express; they speak to the understanding, as algebraical characters may do, but the passions, the affections, and the will, hear them not: these continue dormant and inactive, till we speak to them in the language of nature, to which they are all attention and obedience. Abolish the use of articulate sounds and writing among mankind for a

century, and every man would be a painter, an actor, and an orator."*

Hence, in the earlier ages of the world, the use of types and symbolical institutions for the purpose of conveying instruction to the human mind.

A type is a sign or symbol of something future; or an example designed by God to prefigure that future thing. It has been defined "a rough draught or model, to represent a more perfect object or work, to be afterwards shown."† The following requisites must be united in constituting any one thing a type of another. First, it is necessary that it be expressly designed by God to represent its antitype. It is not enough that there be a resemblance; it must appear that the resemblance was designed. It is not sufficient that we are able to point out a striking analogy, we must also show that this analogy was intended. The similitude between the flower of the grass and the fleeting nature of all human glory is obvious; and on this similitude is founded the remark of scripture, that all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass: but we cannot say that the one was a type of the other. Secondly, to constitute a type, it is also necessary that it be the representation of something future. Hence the typical institutions of the Mosaic economy are called a shadow of things to

* Reid's Inquiry into the Mind, &c. p. 101.

† Jortin's Remarks, vol. i. p. 273.

come: and the things which happened unto the fathers, which were types, are said to have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come: and the things which by the appointment of God were transacted in the tabernacle of old, are described as prefiguring what was afterwards to be done in the heavenly sanctuary. Thirdly, it is requisite that in every type there be something of the same general nature with that which is contained in the thing typified. And, Fourthly, that combined with this general correspondence between the type and the thing prefigured, there should exist that disproportion which might be expected between the shadow and the substance.

These principles are clearly deducible from the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the fathers of the Socinian school, Faustus Socinus and Crellius, admit. That epistle, and other parts of scripture, warrant the classification of types into legal, prophetical, and historical. The sacrifices, festivals, and even modes of worship, divinely instituted among the Jews, were typical of the oblation of the Redeemer, and of the advantages enjoyed under his reign. Typical prophecies are things which happened, or were done, in ancient times, and are recorded in the Old Testament, which represented certain facts or events of much more importance in the history of Christ or of his gospel.*

* Jortin's Remarks, vol. i. p. 273.

The ancient prophets sometimes prefigured or signified things future by means of external symbols. Thus, the destruction of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, was denoted by Isaiah's casting off his prophetical garments, and his going barefoot. The subjugation of a people was signified by making bonds and yokes. The dispersion and restoration of the Jews are intimated by the valley full of dry bones, and their resurrection to life by the Spirit of God. The calling of the Gentiles was signified to the apostle Peter in a vision, by the descent of a vessel let down from heaven by four corners, containing all manner of living creatures, clean and unclean. Historical types are numerous, and are the characters, actions, and circumstances, of persons recorded in the Old Testament, so ordered by providence as to be exact prefigurations of the characters, actions, and circumstances, of persons under the gospel dispensation. We have examples of types of this class in Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses.

What are the principles by which we are to be guided in the interpretation of types? By what means may we conclude with certainty that this or that person or thing, which is mentioned in the Old Testament, is a type of Christ, or of gospel blessings? In attempting to spiritualize the scripture, as it is called, many excellent men have exposed divine truth to the ridicule of the profane. In place of ascertaining the

literal sense of a passage, they discover a mystical signification, grounded on a fanciful resemblance ; not adverting to the important canon of interpretation, that in no case are we at liberty to depart from the plain and obvious sense of scripture, but on grounds which obviously authorize and require it. "I hold it," says the learned and pious Hooker, "for most an infallible rule in expositions of sacred scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the latter is commonly the worst."

It is foreign to my present purpose to enter on the principles and rules of typical interpretation. But I may remark, generally, that there are certain persons and events mentioned in scripture, which, we are sure, have a typical reference, because they are so represented, either directly or by implication, in the sacred volume.

The types were designed to convey, through a medium adapted to the former dispensations, the knowledge of him who was to come to save and bless mankind. To those who were spiritually minded, much instruction and consolation would be communicated. They would see in the sign the thing signified; and like the prophets who searched what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, they would devoutly meditate on the symbolical representation,

and by it be directed to the thing which was prefigured. To us also the types are useful, as they show that the same great plan of redeeming mercy was made known from the beginning. The evidence in support of divine revelation is thus strengthened. In this way also, it is shown, that a main end of the whole, is to lead us to the knowledge of God, and enjoyment of his favour, through the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer.

That the rite of sacrifice was symbolical, is a circumstance which follows from the admission of its divine origin; since all the institutions appointed by God must bear the marks of his wisdom. It obviously was designed to "be considered as a sensible and striking representation of a punishment, which the sinner was conscious he deserved from God's justice; and then on the part of God, it becomes a public declaration of his holy displeasure against sin, and of his merciful compassion for the sinner; and on the part of the offender, when offered by or for him, it implies a sincere confession of guilt, and a hearty desire of obtaining pardon." It implied that death is the wages of sin; that the offerer humbly acknowledged this to be his desert; and that God has graciously made provision for averting from him this just punishment, through the substitution and sufferings of an appointed and peculiar victim. In regard to the offerer, it was commanded, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of

the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him."*

That this institution was typical of the sacrifice of Christ is equally certain. This I consider to be fully established by the Epistle to the Hebrews. The numerous passages in the Old and New Testaments by which it is proved that the ancient sacrifices were designed representations of the work of the Redeemer, will afterwards be considered. They were designed representations because they could not really effect those great objects of which they were symbolical. They were incapable of giving an adequate manifestation of the infinite holiness of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; or, of the essential rectitude of his nature; or, of the justice and judgment which are the habitation of his throne; or, of the greatness of the guilt of mankind; or of the fearful nature of the consequences of sin. These ends were truly attained by the sacrifice of Him who is described in Scripture as "the propitiation for our sins:—the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world: the great High priest of good things to come who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God." He has manifested by means the most impressive, the love, wisdom, purity, and righteousness of the Deity. Him God gave up to display his displeasure against sin, and his compassion to the sinner.

* Levit. i. 4.

"Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

If the death inflicted on the piacular victim exemplified that death which had been denounced against man's disobedience, the Saviour gave his life a ransom for many. If the death inflicted on the victim shewed the abhorrence of God against sin, and his righteousness in its punishment;—how fully and awfully were these displayed in the sufferings and death of his own Son! If the animal slain in sacrifice was substituted in room of the sinner, and his iniquities symbolically transferred to the victim, and the merited punishment thus averted; Christ voluntarily placed himself in room of mankind, and suffered for them what was due to their offences that he might deliver them from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree; by whose stripes ye are healed. Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The designed reference which animal sacrifice of old bore to Christ the true propitiation, must have rendered that institution peculiarly significant and instructive. Through this medium the people were symbolically taught all the essential doctrines of the gospel; and to the humble and pious who exercised repentance towards God, and faith towards the promised Redeemer, this divine ordinance would be the means of conveying peace, and hope, and strength. They learned from the declarations of the prophets that sacrifice was not to be substituted in room of moral dispositions, and dutiful obedience to the will of God; but that, on the contrary, it was designed to shew the divinely appointed means by which their sins and shortcomings might be expiated; and that if by sincere contrition, and a full reliance on the promised Deliverer, they offered the sacrifice typical of the real and effective propitiation for sin, they would obtain forgiveness. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of rams, or of he goats.—Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they

shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

But as this animating promise could not be fulfilled through the efficacy of sacrifices, which the Apostle declares could not take away sin; its accomplishment could only be secured through that only real and infinitely efficacious sacrifice for sin which they were intended to prefigure. Through this proper and most valuable atonement made for us when Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," there is provided for mankind a great salvation. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.—The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."†

Thus does it appear that the ancient sacrifices were intended to be symbolical representations of the sacrifice of Christ. In addition to the testimony of Scripture we have that of divine Providence to this fact. For when Christ effected by his most perfect oblation that which they prefigured, the repetition of them was unnecessary and improper; and by an extraordinary interposition of Almighty God, whose providence ruleth over all, the offering of the sacrifices of the law was utterly prevented. "Indeed, the destruction of the temple, and the irretrievable loss of the Levitical genealogies, have put it out of the power of man to offer a sacrifice according to the divine law. The

* Isa. i. 10—19. † Eph. i. 7; 1 John i. 7.

law was provisional; 'a shadow of good things to come.' Its purpose has been fully answered; and by the finger of Omnipotence its expiration is recorded on the everlasting columns of historic truth."* As if to give us still farther confirmation of this, the Jews, ever since the ritual of the law was divested of its original design and use, as a prefiguration of the work of the promised Deliverer, have been allowed to graft upon it, or rather to substitute in room of it, numberless superstitious observances and silly fables, which are marked so palpably with folly and absurdity, that, rather than admit their heavenly origin, many of the House of Israel, it is to be feared, quietly embrace Deism.

I. Hence it follows, in the first place, that the sacrifice of Christ was designed in the purpose of God, and that all other divinely instituted sacrifices from the beginning were appointed, to afford a representation of this. In place therefore of supposing with Socinians and others, that God having for certain ends instituted the rite of sacrifice in the Jewish Church, the death of Christ is, in allusion to the ancient rite, and in accommodation to the prejudices of mankind, denominated a sacrifice, we are required on the fullest evidence to believe, that God before the foundation of the world designed the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ; and that in order to exhibit to mankind from the beginning

* Smith on the Sacrifice, &c., p. 35.

its nature and efficacy, and to convey to the penitent and believing its benefits, he was pleased graciously to appoint a typical priesthood and sacrifice.

II. It also follows from the principles established by the foregoing observations, that as animal sacrifice was a divine institution, symbolical and typical of the sacrifice of Christ, it was of course intended to be instructive of the nature and use of the sacrifice of Christ. We may, therefore, learn from the account which the Scriptures give of the former, much concerning the real design of the latter. Originating in the divine wisdom, it must have been intended to direct mankind to just views concerning the nature of the death of Christ. "In examining the meaning of the sacrificial terms of the ceremonial service, when they occur in the New Testament, we are clearly directed to the explanation that is circumstantially given of them in the Old." If it was peculiarly the office of the priest to offer sacrifice to God, the Great High Priest of good things to come offered up himself; if by the blood of the animal slain for sacrifice, atonement was made for sin, Christ by his own most precious blood made atonement to God for us; if the priest under the law, when he presented the sacrifice on the altar had to do with God, so Christ in making reconciliation for iniquity by his death, had to deal for us with the Supreme Judge, and Moral Governor of the universe; —he offered himself through the Eternal Spirit, with-

out spot, unto God. In a word, the expressions employed by the Divine Wisdom from the beginning, in reference to sacrifice, are in their true and most comprehensive signification applicable to his death; and were intended to give us information respecting the nature and design of his sufferings.

CHAP. III.

ON THE SACRIFICES OF THE PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION.

SCRIPTURE assures us that Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:"—that he was "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." But what meaning are we to attach to these expressions unless we understand them as referring to the significant and emblematical rite of sacrifice, instituted to prefigure the death incurred by sin, and the atonement by which its guilt was to be expiated? It is admitted that this atonement had a retrospective efficacy; that through it God declared his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past: and have we not, therefore, the best grounds for regarding the institution of sacrifice as having been intended from the beginning impressively to show forth the death of the Redeemer? He is called the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, because he really fulfilled that which the sacrifice of lambs, and other animals, prefigured.

We shall have ample reason to be satisfied of the truth of this by taking a brief survey of the notices

recorded in Scripture of the sacrifices of the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations.

In the first promise there is an allusion to the sufferings of the Mighty Deliverer who was then graciously announced: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The tranquillising effect which this disclosure of mercy had on the first transgressors, overwhelmed as they were by a consciousness of guilt, and the fear of wrath, cannot be doubted. It was while standing at the bar of their Judge, and after sentence had been pronounced, that they were cheered by the promise, that the seed of the woman, one who should possess the very nature of man, though he should be a sufferer, would in the end be victorious. This declaration included, though obscurely, the plan of redemption; and its progressive development was to resemble the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

In order that the great truths comprehended in this promise might be more clearly understood and deeply felt, we have every reason to believe that sacrifice was immediately instituted as an explanatory ordinance. Though the words of the institution are not recorded, the fact cannot be questioned; because sacrifice was used in the worship of God from the earliest period after the fall of man; and we are assured that it could

not have been thus acceptably practised but in consequence of divine appointment. In accordance with this we are informed, that unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them. We know that the inferior animals were not used as food, at least with the divine permission, till after the flood; and consequently there could be no occasion for slaying them, unless it were for sacrifice, till after that period. Our first parents being clothed at the expense of life, and by the special interposition of God, had a striking representation given them of the mode in which forfeited happiness should be restored, and of that perfect righteousness by which they should be justified before God. It was an intimation to them that the Deliverer, denominated the Seed of the Woman, should redeem them by his sufferings.

Thus have we presented to our view immediately after the fall, and before the first transgressors were expelled from paradise, the two principal methods in which God unfolded to mankind the way of salvation, namely, prophecy and typical sacrifice. Both these methods of divine revelation were continued in the church with increasing clearness and precision till the coming of Christ; and both were intended to direct the faith of the people to the Substitute and Surety of sinners, who by the one offering up of himself was to obtain eternal redemption. In the first promise we

have the foundation of that series of prophecies which was delivered from age to age, which announced the divine nature, the incarnation, the sufferings, death, and subsequent glories of the Redeemer. In the first sacrifice we have the basis of that series of typical observances, which prefigured the mediation and atonement of the Son of God. Prophecy was the annunciation of what was future, conveyed in ordinary language. Types formed also the annunciation of what was future, expressed not by words but by signs. These signs were indefinitely varied; and accordingly the rites appointed to be observed in the worship of God, and the vicissitudes of the church in its trials and triumphs, recorded in the Old Testament, were emblematical. They served unto the example and shadow of good things to come. But the most prominent of these emblems was sacrifice, which by its direct reference to the atonement of Christ, aided the faith and hope of believers; and which by its universal use, even when its original design was forgotten, may have prepared mankind for that message of salvation which, in the fulness of time, was sent to them through a crucified Redeemer.

These views are confirmed by the circumstances recorded in Scripture regarding the sacrifice of Abel. By faith we are told that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying

of his gifts. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord: and Abel, he brought of the firstlings of his flock. If we bear in mind the observations already made, we shall readily perceive the ground on which the sacrifice of Abel was accepted, while that of Cain was rejected. Abel offered his sacrifice in faith, in strict accordance with the command of God, and in firm reliance on his promise: he acknowledged by the death inflicted on an innocent animal his own desert as a sinner, and his trust in the way of redemption and recovery which God had mercifully provided: he thus as a true penitent approached God in worship, looking for pardon and reconciliation, renewing and sanctifying grace, through an atonement. But Cain, viewing God merely as his Creator and Preserver, offered the fruits of the earth as an acknowledgment of his goodness; entirely overlooking his own character as a sinner, and disregarding the divinely instituted sacrificial rite, the appointed emblem of the new and living way of access to God. "In short, Cain, the first-born of the fall, exhibits the first-fruits of his parents' disobedience, in the arrogance and self-sufficiency of reason rejecting the aids of Revelation, because they fell not within its apprehension of right. He takes the first place in the annals of Deism, and displays, in his proud rejection of the ordinance of sacrifice, the same spirit, which, in later days, has actuated his

enlightened followers, in rejecting the sacrifice of Christ."

The terms in which God expostulates with Cain convey a rebuke for his not offering an animal sacrifice like his brother Abel: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth even at the door." There is here a reference to sin-offering as a known institution; the neglect of which in Cain incurred the divine displeasure; and the observance of animal sacrifice is anew enforced. The sacrifice which Abel presented unto God was of this description. The reason of its acceptance, according to the apostle Paul, was the faith in which it was offered;—faith in the Redeemer promised under the appellation of the Seed of the Woman: "Of this faith, the offering of an animal in sacrifice, appears to have been the legitimate, and consequently the instituted, expression. The institution of animal sacrifice, then, was coeval with the fall, and had a reference to the sacrifice of our redemption. But, as it had also an immediate, and most apposite, application to that important event in the condition of man, which, as being the occasion of, was essentially connected with, the work of redemption; *that* likewise, we have reason to think, was included in its signification. And thus, upon the whole, sacrifice appears to have been ordained, as a standing memorial of the

death introduced by sin, and of that death which was to be suffered by the Redeemer."

First, then, It is evident that the offering of Abel was different in its nature from that which was presented by Cain; and that this difference constituted the principal ground for the acceptance of the one, and the rejection of the other. It was a more full, a more ample sacrifice, that is, it partook more essentially of the nature of sacrifice, than the offering of Cain. It was "of the firstlings of his flock," an animal slain in solemn sacrifice unto God, in obedience to a known divine command, whereas Cain offered merely of the fruit of the ground, as an expression of thankfulness for the bounty of God. Hence,

Secondly, Abel is said to have offered his more excellent sacrifice by faith. On this circumstance there is much stress laid by the Apostle, as he adduces it in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, as an example illustrative of the power and efficacy of faith. But what was the object of this faith? Unquestionably a divine revelation, the promise of the Messiah, to which such frequent allusion is made in Scripture, and in firm reliance on which the patriarchs lived and died. "These all—(Abel and all the others whom the Apostle had named)—died in faith, not having received the fulfilment of the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them,

and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." This could not be the promise of entering the land of Canaan, because to Abel, Enoch, and Noah, no such promise was given, and because that even in regard to Abraham, the Evangelist (John viii. 56.) explains the expression of his seeing the promises afar off and embracing them, as signifying, his seeing the day of Christ, and rejoicing. To the completion of the Great Promise of the coming of the Seed of the Woman, to accomplish the redemption of mankind, Abel looked with firm reliance on the truth of God, and in the exercise of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. In the faith of this promise he offered unto God the kind of sacrifice which he had enjoined as the evidence of dependence on the mercy which was thus proclaimed, and as the typical expression of that atonement which was to be made in the fulness of time: And therefore,

In the *third* place, he obtained the testimony of God to the acceptableness of his sacrifice, and to his own personal justification before God. "By which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh." He thus became "heir of the righteousness which is by faith, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that be-

lieve." It was declared by God himself, that he was righteous before him, by his visibly attesting the excellency and acceptableness of his oblation. He probably caused fire to descend from heaven to consume his sacrifice, as he did in regard to that of Abraham, of Aaron, of Gideon, of David, of Solomon, and of Elijah. For how, as Jerome remarks, could Cain know that God accepted his brother's offering and rejected his own, unless God had sent down fire to consume his sacrifice? If it was not by this particular token that Abel understood that God was propitious to him, it must have been by some other, equally indubitable.

Thus, "it is easy to be demonstrated that sacrifices owed their original to the will and appointment of God. The Apostle expressly says, as Moses said before him, that Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God. But it would not have been acceptable, if it had not been of divine institution; according to the plain, obvious, and eternal maxim of all true religion, Christian, Mosaic, and Natural. In vain do they worship God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* If there be any truth in this maxim, Abel would have worshipped God in vain; and God would have had no respect for his offering, if his sacrificing had been merely a commandment of his father Adam, or an invention of his own. The divine acceptance, therefore,

* Mark vii. 7.

is a demonstration of a divine institution. If any reader is not yet convinced, I would desire him to say why he does not now offer up a bullock, a sheep, or a pigeon, according to his ability, as a thank-offering to God, and a testimony of his gratitude to the divine goodness after a recovery from a dangerous disease, after a remarkable deliverance in any other kind, or as an evidence of the just apprehensions which he has of the demerit of sin. The true reason why he will not do it himself, is because he cannot know that God will accept such will-worship, and so he concludes that he should herein worship God in vain. From hence he may certainly infer, that, since Abel did not sacrifice in vain, it was not will-worship, but a divine appointment."*

We thus discover the reasons for the difference in the divine reception of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. This cannot be accounted for by those who deny the divine institution of sacrifice. Philo, in his discourse on this subject, alleges that the defect of Cain's sacrifice consisted in two things: First, that he did not offer it soon enough, but after certain days. Secondly, that he did not offer of the first-fruits of the earth, as did Abel, of the first-fruits of his sheep, but only of the fruits: but as Whitby observes, there is no ground for either of these things in the text, which seems to inti-

* Hallet's Continuation of Pierce on the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 12.

mate that they both offered at the same time; nor does it say that Cain offered not of the first-fruits of the earth. Various other reasons have been suggested by way of attempting to solve the difficulty, but they are only illustrative of the pride and the weakness of the understanding when it refuses to be enlightened and directed by the revelation of God. "Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than his brother's, because it was offered with faith in the great atonement, which he believed was in due time to take away the sin of the world; and because it consisted of what had been divinely instituted to prefigure that atonement in which he appears to have reposed all his trust."*

The next notice we have in scripture of sacrifice, occurs in the case of Noah, (Gen. viii. 20—22.) At the command of God, he and all who were with him in the ark came out of it, when the earth again became habitable. He first employed himself in an act of worship, expressive of his thankfulness to God for his preservation, and of his dependence for life and acceptance, on the atonement of the promised Deliverer. "He built an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

* Stackhouse, Hist. vol. i. p. 119.

There are here several important particulars which claim our attention.

First, It is evident that Noah had received the institution of sacrifice from his ancestors, and not from immediate revelation. This was an ordinance practised in the worship of God with which he appears to have been familiar: and though its observance is not expressly mentioned in the period that intervened between the time of Abel and the flood, we cannot doubt that it was used by the faithful as the expression of their belief in the truth of the great promise. Noah erected an altar, on which he presented to God the divinely appointed typical sacrifice of propitiation.

Secondly, This typical sacrifice was acceptable to God. The Lord smelled a sweet savour. But how could the slaughter of animals in honour of the Deity be pleasing in his sight? Has he not said, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills? I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" We must therefore consider the burnt-offerings of Noah as acceptable to God, because they were designed to typify and show forth the offering and sacrifice which Christ presented unto God for a sweet smelling savour; and because they were so regarded by Noah when he prac-

tised them in the worship of his Maker, as the expression of his faith, and hope, and confidence. This view is fully established,

Thirdly, By a consideration of the nature of the covenant which was founded upon, and connected with, the sacrifice of Noah. The covenant established with this patriarch, on occasion of his presenting his sacrifice, was a positive engagement without any restipulation, the absolute promise of good to himself and to his posterity. He gave to Noah a new grant of the earth and of the inferior animals, different from that which had been originally conveyed to Adam, inasmuch as this was founded upon the covenant of grace, or upon the great atonement by which the provisions of that covenant are secured. To this grant was annexed a promise, that the earth should no more be visited with such an overwhelming calamity, but should be preserved till the consummation of all things. "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." The covenant of grace, with which that made with Noah is connected, is unchanging and eternal, depending for its fulfilment on the word and the mighty power of God. "For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the

earth; so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

There was included in the covenant made with Noah, an express grant of animal food to man. While to Adam was given for meat, every herb upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree, to Noah it was said, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." But while animal food was permitted, the eating of blood was prohibited, chiefly, I apprehend, on account of its being used by divine appointment in making atonement.

Fourthly, The distinction of animals into clean and unclean, recognised by Noah, tends to prove the divine institution of sacrifice. For since animal food was not in use, at least by divine permission, before the deluge, such distinction can be conceived only in reference to sacrifice. Accordingly, we find the first use to which this distinction is applied in scripture, is that of sacrifice; Noah having taken of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings. The question is, how was this difference first made? Was it by the common reason of mankind which led them to determine that ravenous creatures

were unfit for sacrifice? Are we not warranted to believe rather that it was introduced by God, at the same time that he instituted sacrifice: "For whoever considers carefully," says Dr. Kennicot, "will find, that the law is in part a republication of antecedent revelations and commands, long before given to mankind."

Under the law, the Jews were commanded to abstain from the use of certain animals in food, as they were also prohibited from offering them in sacrifice. This distinction, as it regarded food, seems chiefly to have been designed to signify the purity of all who are consecrated to the worship and service of God; the uncleanness of the worshippers of idols, and of all who are under the guilt and pollution of sin. Accordingly, the most striking view which is given of the Messiah's reign, is that in which the distinction alluded to is represented as ceasing, in consequence of the wonderful change effected in the dispositions of the most savage animals. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them: and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in

all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." *

We are now to consider the sacrifices which were offered by Abraham.—Though the world was yet in its infancy, mankind, in place of possessing the purity of manners which poets have ascribed to the earlier ages of the human race, showed that depravity and alienation from God to which our nature is prone. The wide-spreading calamities which the deluge had occasioned were practically forgotten; and instead of loving and worshipping the Creator, they began to give religious homage to the heavenly bodies. When darkness and idolatry prevailed, He who had designed to magnify his mercy by the redemption of mankind, preserved true religion in the line in which the Saviour was to come, and for that end specially separated Abraham to be the heir of the promises, and the medium of conveying blessings to the families of the earth. The life of that distinguished patriarch forms an era more brightly illuminated than any preceding age, in which the propitiation and glory of the Redeemer are more fully revealed, and in which, both by the language of articulate speech, and of emblematical signs, the good things of the gospel were more clearly disclosed. In obedience to the divine command, he left his country and kindred, and went towards Canaan, relying on the truth and faithfulness

* Isaiah xi. 6—9.

of God. The formation of Abraham's character, indicating so much spirituality and holiness, so much self-denial and trust in God, furnishes evidence of the power and plenitude of divine grace, and shows that, if the plan of redemption was not so well known to him as to us, its renewing and sanctifying efficacy was not less felt and enjoyed. "By faith, when he was called to go out unto a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, he obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

There are two occasions recorded (Gen. xv. and xxii.) on which Abraham presented sacrifice to God. In the first instance, when he desired of God a sign to confirm his faith in the promises which had been given to him regarding himself and his offspring, the Lord, in gracious compliance with the request, prescribed a solemn sacrifice. He commanded him to take an heifer, a she-goat, and a ram, of three years old each, the age at which they were supposed to be arrived at maturity; and also a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. "As the ratification of a covenant between the Lord and his servant was intended, the animals were divided asunder, the birds alone excepted:

because the form of covenanting required, that the persons concerned should pass between the parts of the sacrifice; perhaps intimating, that he who broke the covenant, might expect in like manner to be cut asunder by the sword of avenging justice."* This sacrifice which Abraham offered, and which God had prescribed, was accepted of him; in attestation of which the symbols of his presence passed between the parts of the victims, and probably at length consumed them. "It came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In that same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.—Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be." The nature of this covenant, and the blessings comprehended in it, are further unfolded in the seventeenth chapter, where we are told that "the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abraham fell on his face: and God talked with him saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many

* Scott.

nations.—And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give to thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

That the solemn sacrifice which the patriarch on this occasion offered was intended as a prefiguration of the atonement of Christ, and was on the part of Abraham a manifestation of his faith in the promised Seed of the Woman, through whom the atonement was to be made, appears to me certain, not only from the evidence which has been already adduced to prove that sacrifice was originally instituted for this design, but from the nature of the covenant which was founded upon it, and ratified by it. The covenant of grace made between the Father and the Son Jesus Christ, on behalf of mankind, and the blessings of which are so great and various, was made known to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to David, and to others; and in so far as there was any thing in the discovery peculiar to each of those persons, that peculiarity bears the name of the individual to whom it was revealed: but it was the same gracious covenant that

was established with all of them. As the new covenant was ratified by the blood of the Redeemer, when he gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God; so was every prior manifestation of it accompanied by typical sacrifice.

With regard to the form in which it was established with Abraham, the spiritual signification of the promises contained in it is very obvious. In the first place, Abraham was assured that he should be the Head or Father of all believers, and in this respect an eminent type of Him who in all things has the preeminence. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In the second place, he was told that God in a very peculiar sense would be the God of his posterity. This promise, in its principal import, was not fulfilled to Israel according to the flesh. They indeed were in a covenant relation to God; and were the depositories of revelation till the Saviour came; but the spiritual seed, they who of every nation possess the faith of Abraham, have this promise fulfilled in its utmost extent. So entirely does this promise, first made to Abraham, include the sum and substance of the gospel, that the apostle Paul quotes it as forming a leading part of the covenant of grace: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. In the third place, Abraham was assured that his posterity,

though afflicted and oppressed for a season in Egypt, would surely be delivered from Egyptian bondage. But the deliverance from Egypt was typical of a greater from sin and death; and to this doubtless the promise made to Abraham had a reference. Those who were accustomed, like Abraham, to the language of signs, would understand more readily than we are apt to suppose the thing signified; and the redemption of his posterity from temporal bondage would suggest to the mind of the Patriarch that greater redemption afterwards to be accomplished by the Son of God. In the fourth place, to Abraham was the promise made that his posterity should possess Canaan as their inheritance. But the land of Canaan was typical of heaven; and to this incorruptible inheritance all the patriarchs continually looked, while they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The other recorded instance in which Abraham presented sacrifice to God was when he offered up his son Isaac. The patriarch, on that occasion, as it appears to me, had a clear discovery given to him of the way of salvation through the promised Redeemer. The offering up of his son was no doubt designed to be a trial of his faith in God, and of his obedience to his commandment; but it was chiefly intended for the purpose of affording him a view of the way in which redemption from sin and its consequences was to be attained. The transaction was fitted to make the

deepest impression on the heart; and the circumstances attending it being emblematical signs, led the mind forward to the great events which they prefigured. In an age of the world when it was usual to address the mind through the medium of signs, and when, therefore, men were accustomed to give these signs a quick interpretation; it would readily occur to the patriarch that the sacrifice which he was now required to make had a typical signification, and that to this typical signification he was to direct his attention. Without hesitation he obeyed; and took Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. The comment of the Apostle on this instructive and typical occurrence is, that Abraham by faith when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence he also received him in a figure.

In this event there was a striking prefiguration of God's own Son as delivered for our offences;—as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Abraham was commanded to offer up in sacrifice his beloved son Isaac on Mount Moriah; to which he immediately repaired; and where he arrived three days after he had received the command. Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was offered on the same mountain. Isaac carried the wood of the burnt-offering,

and Jesus bore the cross on which he made atonement for sin. Isaac yielded implicit obedience to the command of God; Jesus meekly and willingly laid down his life in compliance with the will of his Father. Isaac, on the third day, was delivered from death by the immediate interposition of God: Jesus on the third day rose triumphant from the tomb to the enjoyment of immortal glory and happiness. We have the authority of the New Testament for believing that this transaction was thus clearly understood by the persons engaged in it: for it was on this occasion doubtless that Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ: he saw it, and was glad.

That Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the patriarchs in general, frequently worshipped God by sacrifice, testifying thereby their faith in the promised Redeemer, and their expectation of the great atonement, is certain from its being expressly declared that wherever they pitched their tent, they built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord. For, the altar being the elevation on which the sacrifices were offered, its erection in any place was a proof that *there* sacrifices were presented to God. Oblations were not yet indeed fixed to times and seasons, as they were afterwards under the law, especially the most solemn of them; and therefore we may suppose that they were offered upon some appearance of God to his servants; on great mercies received; in times of great danger,

troubles, or perils to themselves and families: when they were in doubts and perplexity about their affairs, and would inquire of God for direction, they betook themselves to this solemn service.

God's accepting of the sacrifice of animals, and his testifying his acceptance in a visible manner, proves at once that the institution was appointed by himself, and that it was designed to shew forth that sacrifice of infinite value which is ever pleasing in his sight. By means of typical oblation Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: and Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the preparatory dispensations, lived and died in the faith of a Saviour to come, who in the time fixed by unerring wisdom would appear to make the great atonement, and to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Such was the fulness of this expiation, that its virtue reached to the first parents of the human race, extended to all past ages, rescued from all of them some as trophies of its mighty efficacy, who have been raised to endless happiness and glory. Such is the boundless efficacy of the atonement of Christ that it cleanses from all sin, saves the chief of sinners, and continues, and will continue, to convey pardon and purity till all the families of mankind receive its blessings. To those who in the only way of salvation have already gone into heaven, others are ever adding; and when the number of the redeemed is complete, one theme will animate them, as one com-

mon redemption will be the subject of their praise. The patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, together with the noble army of martyrs, and the whole ransomed family of God, will together celebrate the glories of that Redeemer, by the faith of whom they lived, and in the faith of whom they died. The difference of dispensation under which they lived while on earth, will produce no discordant feeling, no contrariety of views, no jarring notes in their song of praise. Rescued from the same great ruin, by the same gracious interposition, partakers of the same great salvation, sanctified and adorned by the grace of the same Spirit, invested with the same privileges, who can conceive their blessedness in the full possession of that kingdom, which was prepared for them before the foundation of the world? "Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing."

From this review of the patriarchal economy, and of the nature of those sacrifices which were offered before the law, the divine origin of sacrifice, and its typical design, are justly inferred.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE SACRIFICES MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF JOB.

When it is considered that the prophet Ezekiel mentions Job, Noah, and Daniel, as three persons of distinguished piety; and that the Apostle James enforces the duty, and illustrates the advantages of patience, by the example of Job; we cannot reasonably entertain a doubt that the narrative contained in this book is historical truth. It is a literal history of real events, though the greater part of it is in poetry.

A very high antiquity is generally and justly ascribed to this book. It is evident, from the long life which Job attained; the allusions to the idolatrous worship of the sun and moon, and the entire silence of all the speakers introduced in this record in regard to the law of Moses, and the miraculous interpositions of God on behalf of Israel; that Job and his friends lived in a very early age of the world. They are generally supposed to have flourished before, or about the time of Moses; and the sentiments and religious opinions which are maintained in their discourse, are such as were consistent with the information that obtained before the Mosaic dispensation. "Job appears to

have worshipped God in the manner of the patriarchs before the priesthood was confined to Aaron; and in the detail of his piety, he affords a transcript of those primitive principles which he might have derived from Abraham and Nahor. He and his friends seem to have been acquainted with the rules of traditional religion, as collected from occasional revelations to the patriarchs."*

As to the person by whom the book of Job was written, "the opinion most anciently and generally entertained was, that it was composed by Moses; who might have collected the information which it contained in the land of Midian; and no objection to this opinion can be drawn from the place which is assigned to the book in the Bible, as no attention appears to have been paid to chronology in this arrangement.—It is cited as scriptural by the Apostles; and was universally received as canonical by all the fathers, councils, and churches."† Both Lowth and Sherlock affirm that the book of Job is the oldest now extant in the world.

By whomsoever the narrative was composed, the inspiration and divine authority of the book are undoubted. Job himself appears in a prophetic character, speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, and giving utterance to the most sublime truths concerning

* Grey's Key, &c. p. 226.

† P. 245. The different opinions on this subject are noticed by Magee in his Dissert. on the Hist. and Book of Job.

the creation, the fall, the deluge, the Redeemer, and a future state.

In this Book there are two occasions mentioned in which sacrifices were presented to God. (Chap. i. 4, 5.) "And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." From this passage it is evident,

I. That these sacrifices were propitiatory. They were sacrifices of a similar nature with those presented to God by Abel, Noah, and the patriarchs generally. They were whole burnt-offerings presented on the altar to expiate the sins which might have been committed during the relaxation of a social entertainment. This venerable patriarch offered a burnt-offering for each of his children: for he said, "It may be that my sons have sinned."

II. The offering of the atoning sacrifice was connected with moral disposition. For previously to its being offered Job sent and sanctified his sons:—by which expressions we are undoubtedly to understand that he taught them the duty of self-examination and

prayer, preparatory to their drawing near to God in the solemn rites of his worship. This appears to have been the practice of all the patriarchs. When Jacob was to fulfil his vow, and to present sacrifice to God on the altar which he was to erect at Bethel, he said unto his household, and to all that were with him, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."*

It was required that the offerer of propitiatory sacrifice should feel and acknowledge the evil of sin, while he looked to the shedding of atoning blood for its expiation and remission. He was to shew his deep sense of the holiness of God, by preparing his heart to draw near him in worship.

III. Burnt-offerings for sin formed a part of the usual worship which Job rendered unto God. As he did it continually it was of course his common practice: and he thus shewed his knowledge of the fall of man, and of the way of his recovery; of the depravity of human nature, and of the redemption to be wrought out through the sacrifice of the promised Deliverer. He rested his hopes of acceptance upon that sacrifice; and therefore in obedience to the divine will he habitually observed those sacrificial symbols by which he testified

* Gen. xxxv. 2, 3.

his faith in God, and his humble reliance on his mercy.

The other instance of sacrifice mentioned in the book of Job is in the forty-second chapter;—a chapter which furnishes a key to the right interpretation of the whole book. While Job is humbled under a sense of his sins, and with penitence acknowledges his pollution, he is directed by God to offer sacrifices to expiate the guilt of his friends, and to intercede for them. "And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job."

These verses clearly teach that the design of a propitiatory sacrifice is, to turn away the displeasure of the person offended, and to bring the offender again into his favour. God, the person offended, will not admit the offender into his favour without an atone-

ment; and yet, from the benevolence of his nature, he prescribes the atonement which he will accept. The offenders are Eliphaz and his two friends: the offence is their folly in not speaking aright of God; the effect is the wrath of God kindled against them; the means appointed for turning away this wrath is a sacrifice; and the result is reconciliation.

When we connect with these observations that remarkable passage in which Job expresses his confidence in his living Redeemer, whose power was to rescue him from the evils of the present state, and from the corruption of the tomb, we must be struck with the accuracy and clearness of his knowledge of the way of salvation. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."*

No language can be more precise or definite than this; and neither a different translation of the original, nor a different paraphrase of the words contained in it, (though both have been attempted) will ever bring it fairly to apply to any other subject than the character of the Redeemer of mankind, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection from the dead, procured and

* Job xix. 25—28.

effected through Christ. I shall favour my readers by subjoining a part of the admirable criticism and comment of Dr. J. P. Smith on this passage.

" The usual objections against this interpretation are that no vestiges appear in the book of Job of any acquaintance with the doctrine of a future life; that it would be very extraordinary if there really existed in the mind of the composer of this book, any knowledge of the Redeemer to come, that such a glorious hope should show itself nowhere but in this single passage; that we cannot reconcile such an avowal with the despondency which appears to have prevailed in the mind of Job; and that the terms employed do not necessarily import more than the persuasion of a deliverance, by divine goodness, from the present calamity, and a restoration to health and happiness in the present life. To these reasonings we reply:

" Admitting that there is no intimation of the doctrine of immortality and a future judgment, or of the expectation of a Messiah, in any other part of this book, the consequence does not follow. It should be recollected that, in a poetical book, the matter is disposed considerably according to the taste and choice of the writer; and that a more vivid impression might be made, by presenting a capital circumstance with its brightness and force collected into one point, than would be produced if it were dispersed through the general composition. The whole texture of this

passage, introduced with the most impassioned wish for attention and perpetual remembrance, and sustained in the sublimest style of utterance, is evidently thus contrived to interest and impress in the highest degree. Those of our objectors who ascribe the date of the poem to the period of the captivity, cannot refuse to admit that the writer possessed whatever knowledge the Jewish nation had with respect to a Messiah and a future state. The writings of Moses and the prophets, and the greater part of the works of the latter prophets, and the books grouped with the Psalms, were, at this time, the accredited Scriptures of the Jews: and few will be so hardy as to affirm that no intimations occur in those writings of the doctrines which constituted the hope and consolation of Israel. On this (in my opinion untenable) hypothesis, it would appear highly credible that some very distinct reference to those doctrines would enter materially into the structure of the work.

" We have better evidence than the dicta of German anti-supernaturalists, or the opinions of English refiners upon theology, that the patriarchs from whom the tradition of divine truths had descended to Job, ' confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and desired a better country, that is an heavenly.'* Nor is it credible that the promise of a Messiah was totally unknown to the true worshippers of Jehovah

* See Heb. xi. 5—16.

in Arabia, allied to the family of Abraham, and in the habit of reverentially cherishing the remains of primeval truth. And, besides the possession of the patriarchal religion, what is there to prevent any but a Deist from conceiving that God might inspire his faithful and afflicted servant with the knowledge and the joyful confidence which he expresses? Is not such a supposition consonant with all the known scheme and principles of the divine dispensations?

"It is not necessary to suppose that Job understood the full import and extent of what he was 'moved by the Holy Spirit to speak.' The general belief, on the divine testimony, of a future Saviour from sin and its consequent evils, would place him on a level with other saints, in his own and many succeeding ages, who died in faith, not receiving the promises in their clearest development, but seeing them afar off.—It is proper for us to compare the language of this passage with the character and declarations of Him to whom all the prophets gave witness. He in the fulness of the times was manifested, as the Redeemer from sin and death, the First and the Last, and the Living One, the Resurrection and the Life; who in the appointed season, is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see him; whose voice the dead shall hear, and hearing shall live."*

* Smith's Scripture Test. vol. i. p. 286.

CHAP. V.

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF EXPIATORY SACRIFICE DURING THE PATRIARCHAL AGE PROVED FROM ITS UNIVERSAL PREVALENCE THROUGHOUT THE HEATHEN WORLD.

THAT Paganism, at a very early period, taught the expiatory efficacy of animal sacrifice is a position which has been so fully proved, that it may be here taken for granted.

The question is, whence did mankind throughout the heathen world obtain this notion of atonement? It has never been alleged that they received it from the light of nature, or from the principles of human reason. According to Mr. Davison it had its origin in superstition, which "by an easy corruption of mind, might soon come to think, that the animal victim was not merely the representative of a deserved punishment, in which use it was rational; but the real equivalent for it, in which sense it was most unreasonable: and might thus resort to sacrifice for pardon, as well as confession."*

Whatever might have been alleged in favour of this solution, if the notion of the efficacy of expiatory sacrifice had been confined to a single tribe or nation,

* Davison's Inquiry, p. 144.

it is untenable and preposterous when the fact is recollected, that the opinion in question was universal. It has prevailed among every people, and in every stage of civilization. A common and universal effect must flow from some common and universal cause.

But what was the common origin of this common and universal tenet? "Clearly the common origin of which we are in quest, must be far more ancient than the time of Moses.—Let Noah be propounded as the common origin of the doctrine and practice to all his posterity; and the riddle of pagan uniformity will be forthwith read.—But Noah could not communicate what he himself did not possess. In what manner did the doctrine and the practice become known to that great patriarch? Was it from a special revelation, made to himself or to his remote ancestors? Or was it from the wayward operation of a presumptuous and unauthorized superstition? The character of the just man, who was perfect in his generations, and who walked with God, forbids the latter part of the alternative. Mr. Davison himself allows, that the doctrine and the practice could not emanate from the light of nature or from the principles of reason. It remains only, that Noah received them from revelation either mediate or immediate."*

* Faber on the Origin of Expiatory Sacrifice, pp. 51, 52.

CHAP. VI.

ON THE SACRIFICES OF THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

SECT. I.

On the Purposes which this Dispensation was intended to accomplish—The Sacrifices of the Levitical Ritual not of Human but of Divine Origin.

THE deliverance which God had graciously designed for mankind, as well as the mode of its accomplishment, was revealed to our first parents immediately after the fall. This great redemption formed the theme of inspired truth from the beginning, though made known with different degrees of clearness, and under different successive modifications, severally adapted to three successive periods, and varying only in the manner of communication, according to the peculiar exigencies of the three periods to which they respectively belong. It is the reconciliation, founded on the sacrifice of the Redeemer, that connects together as one divine system of religion, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations. The two first were so constituted as to look forward to the last, as the ultimate and most perfect revelation of the will

of God to man. The same great and spiritual blessings were enjoyed by those who lived under them, though possessed in very different measures.

The Mosaic dispensation was intended to answer several purposes; the two following are the chief; First, to preserve the knowledge and worship of the only living and true God, in purity, among one people specially separated from the surrounding nations. Abraham and his posterity were selected to be the depositaries of heavenly truth. With this view, the descendants of that patriarch were miraculously conducted out of Egypt, taken into covenant with God, and ultimately settled in Palestine, the place of residence assigned to them by divine wisdom. Secondly, the Mosaic dispensation was also specially intended to be preparatory to the gospel, and to prefigure the great facts upon which it is founded. It exhibited by typical and shadowy representations the promised Redeemer, the sacrifice by which he was to make reconciliation for iniquity, and the blessings of pardon and of holiness obtained through the efficacy of his blood. The separation of the Hebrew nation from every other people, the promises and predictions of the coming Messiah which were delivered to them, and the numerous rites of that priesthood by which he was prefigured, were designed to prepare the way of the Lord. The law, or the Mosaic dispensation, according to the

testimony of the Apostle Paul, was "the shadow of good things to come."

Even the leading characters and events of the old dispensations are typical representations of the Redeemer's life, office, and blissful reign. The providence of God, without interfering with the free agency of man, so directed and overruled the principal circumstances in the history of his people, as to become typical prophecies of the peculiar facts and characters of the gospel age. The Sovereign Ruler of the universe selected a people from the nations for the great purposes to which I have alluded; and he so ordered, that the remarkable features in their history, during many ages, should furnish typical instruction concerning the nature and properties of human redemption; the incarnation, the humiliation, the death, resurrection, ascension, and reign of Christ. The persons immediately concerned in the production of these events, were following out their own views, and were unconscious at the time of the high purpose which they subserved in relation to future ages. But their lives, under the direction of providence, were constituted typical signs by which they announced to distant generations the grace that was to come unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, and "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow."

Though these principles be fully established, it has been alleged by certain writers that the Mosaic sacrifices originated in human invention; that they were admitted into the worship of God in kind accommodation to the prejudices of the Jewish people, who had been trained up in the practice of sacrifice among the Egyptians. Grotius, Spencer, Warburton, and even Archbishop Tillotson, are to be found among the supporters of this opinion. But the evidence which has been already adduced in proof of the divine origin of sacrifice, is subversive of this singular notion. In addition to this, when we consider the infinite purity of God, who so often declared to Israel that he was jealous of his glory, and who, that he might preserve the Jewish people from idolatry, separated them from the surrounding nations: when we reflect also, that he expressed his abhorrence of all will-worship, and severely punished, in the case of Nadab and Abihu, the practice of it, we must be satisfied that he himself would not have taught for doctrines the inventions of men. "They who suppose," says Dr. Priestley, "that Moses himself was the author of the institutions, civil or religious, that bear his name, and that in framing them he borrowed much from the Egyptians, or other ancient nations, must never have compared them together. Otherwise they could not but have perceived many circumstances in which they differ most essentially from them all. The superiority of that of Moses

is so great, that they could not have had any human, but must have had a divine origin."*

We are to consider atoning sacrifice as enjoined by the Mosaic economy, as a re-appointment of a divine institution which had existed from the beginning. This was especially the case in regard to burnt-offering, which was a typical atonement for sin. While the nations of the world had continued in the use of this significant rite of primeval worship, they had forgotten the great promise originally attached to it, and the efficacious atonement of which it was designed to be typical. To the people, therefore, who were selected to be the depositaries of divine knowledge, God was pleased to re-appoint this symbolical ordinance, freed from superstitious rites, and to enjoin its observance at the times and seasons which he commanded. It had so prominent a place assigned to it in the worship of God, that the people could not fail to perceive the necessity and efficacy of that great expiation which this was intended to show forth.

Agreeably to these views, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, expressly declares that the sacrifice of Christ really effected that which the sacrifices of the Mosaic economy prefigured. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they

* Dissertation on the Origin and Superior Excellence of the Mosaic Institutions.

offer year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered; because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not."* In the ninth chapter, the Apostle institutes a comparison between the Mosaic tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, and purifications, and the great high priest, sacrifice, and purification of the gospel. The high priest under the law entered once every year into the most holy place, not without blood, and obtained through an atonement an annual pardon for the people: "but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He then argues, that if the sacrifices of the law were efficacious to the attainment of those real ends, proper to its own system, for which they were appointed, the sacrifice of Christ has an efficacy for accomplishing the real purposes for which it was presented to God. "If the blood of bulls and

* Chap. x. 1—8.

of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

To the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation an expiatory virtue is here ascribed. They had a real effect on the relations and comfort of the persons concerned. They are accordingly said to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh: an expression, the meaning of which we shall better understand by adverting to the manner in which the Apostle uses it, when he declares, (chap. xiii. 11, 12.) that the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp: wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. How, then, did Christ sanctify his people by his sufferings? First, by expiating their guilt, and averting the divine wrath, so that they might approach a holy God with acceptance. He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:" and the evidences are numerous and striking of God's being pleased with the precious blood and death of his own Son, as the atonement and reconciliation for sin. Secondly, Christ sanctifies his people by removing the defilement of sin

* Heb. ix. 13, 14.

from the heart and conscience. This is effected by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus by faith, and by the Holy Spirit. The faith in the absolute sufficiency of the Redeemer's sacrifice and death which removes our guilt, takes away, at the same time, the defilement of sin. Redemption from the curse of the law is immediately followed by deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan; in inseparable connexion with the ground of our pardon is the most ample provision for our sanctification. The same work of redeeming mercy which furnishes the believer with a gratuitous justification, procures for him that holy Spirit who purifies the heart, and implants those inextinguishable principles of vitality and holiness which ultimately lead to the perfect purity of the whole man. Thirdly, Christ sanctifies his people through his atoning sacrifice also, by effecting their separation from the world, and their dedication to God. The blood that has procured and sealed their pardon, that has made effectual provision for their purification, sets them apart as the peculiar property of God, destined to show forth his praise, and to inherit his everlasting kingdom. They are by this means made a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation: they are invested with privileges corresponding to their exalted condition: they are made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, and are called to entertain the sure and certain hope of an eternal inheritance.

In like manner, the sacrifices of the law sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. Though they could not of themselves take away sin, they impressively shadowed forth the means by which it was to be really expiated. They in a certain sense also accomplished really the threefold purpose to which I have alluded. For as the Jews stood in a peculiar relation to God as the head of their civil, as well as ecclesiastical polity, there was merciful provision made for the expiation of their offences in these several relations; so "that the sacrifices under the temporal and ceremonial dispensation of the law had a real efficacy in releasing those who were subjected to it from its temporal penalties and ceremonial disqualifications, in like manner as the one great Sacrifice under the gospel possesses the power to release mankind from the everlasting penalties of that spiritual law under which all men are bound, and to cleanse the conscience from those moral impurities which forbid all access to that holy Being, who is to be worshipped only in spirit and in truth." But while they had thus a real effect on the relations and comforts of those immediately concerned, they had throughout a designed typical reference to that great sacrifice by which the Lamb of God was to take away the sin of the world. If the offender was delivered by the legal sacrifices from temporal death, and the danger of being cut off from the congregation, these same sacrifices prefigured the redemption of the sinner by

the atonement of Christ. "What was the purifying or sanctification consequent upon such sacrifices? Was it not, as the apostle styles it, the purifying of the flesh; an outward and a transient efficacy, which could not reach to purge their consciences from dead works. But the legal impurity, which wanted to be cleansed, denoted the defilement and impurity of sin. The outward admission to the service of the temple, denotes our spiritual privilege of access unto God, as well in the present ordinances of his church, as in the future inheritance of his eternal kingdom. And all this being performed by the oblation of sacrifices, clean and perfect in their kind, imports our being redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, for a sweet smelling savour, and entered into heaven itself, there to plead the merit of his sacrifice, and make for ever intercession for us."*

Hence it follows, that the terms used in regard to sacrifices by the inspired writers of the Old Testament, were originally framed with a reference to that Great Oblation of which all preceding sacrifices were designed as emblematical representations; and that the Apostles, in place of adopting the sacrificial phraseology of the Jews in accommodation to their prejudices, employed it as having been adapted by divine wisdom

* Boyle Lecture Sermons, vol. iii. pp. 776, 777.

to the sacrifice of the promised Redeemer. That phraseology in its most comprehensive force and signification primarily and truly applies to this one great sacrifice of transcendent efficacy and value. To this, all prior and divine institutions were preparatory and subservient; and the language in which they are set forth is, as was intended, characteristic of the work of Christ. Instead, therefore, as Archbishop Tillotson alleges, the Jewish religion and worship having been framed in condescension to the general apprehensions of men concerning the way of appeasing the Deity by sacrifice; and in place of God's so far complying with this general notion of mankind, as once for all to have a general atonement made for the sins of all mankind by the sacrifice of his only Son:* the truth appears to be, that the sacrifice of Christ originated solely in the decree and purpose of God; that in this decree, and in the types instituted in pursuance of it, the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world; that the rite of sacrifice was divinely appointed from the beginning, to shew forth the death of the Redeemer till he should come; that the primary design of the Jewish ritual was to prefigure this great event; and that so far from being framed in accommodation to the notion universally entertained of appeasing the Deity by sacrifice, the notion itself had sprung from early revelation, and from the observance of a divine institution.

* Tillotson's Works, vol. i. p. 440.

The idea is preposterous, and it seems incredible, that any should seriously maintain, that "the God of truth chose to indulge error, and suited his institutions to the taste of the age: that he contented himself also to take ordinary and natural means, in a case to which they were not adequate; and that while miracles and divine interpositions were displayed in great abundance before the eyes of the Israelites, yet Moses, under the direction of the Almighty, chose to make use of superstitions which he did not want, and which defeated instead of securing his intent; insomuch, that if the apostacies of the Israelites, after such manifestations of the One true God, can be any way accounted for, it must be by the effect of the very expedient which had been employed to prevent these apostacies; that is, to destroy idolatry by indulgence to the very superstitions out of which it grew."*

SECT. II.

The Sacrifices of the Law Propitiatory—Guilt was expiated—Purification and Consecration to the Divine Service followed as consequences—The Annual Atonement—The Passover.

The variety, multiplicity, and typical designs of the sacrifices of the law, are noticed by the Apostle Paul in the following terms: "Whereupon neither the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when

* Bolingbroke's Phil. Works, vol. i. p. 313.

Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people: Saying, this is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."* It is evident from these words that the purposes to which I have already alluded as accomplished by sacrifice, namely, atonement, purification, and consecration to the divine service, were those which the sacrifices of the law effected. Expiation or atonement preceded, and purification and consecration followed as consequences. The penalty of death was removed by the sacrifice of propitiation; and by the same sacrifice impurity was washed away, and the persons were received as holy and acceptable worshippers. Accordingly we find, that in regard to the sacrifices to which the Apostle particularly alludes, the half of the blood was sprinkled on the altar to make an atonement to God, the other on the people to purify and sanctify: and thus was impressively intimated to

* Heb. ix. 18—24.

them that in the One Sacrifice for sin to which they were to look, there was provision for their pardon and purification.*

Our views of the sacrificial ritual of the Mosaic dispensation may be aided; and any objections worthy of notice which have been advanced against it as an institution chiefly typical of the sacrifice of Christ, will be obviated, by adverting to the following particulars illustrative of its nature and design.

I. The main design of the sacrifices of the law was to make atonement for sin. Without shedding of blood, the Apostle assures us, there was no remission. This is so explicitly and so often asserted, that we might as well deny the existence of sacrifice under the Mosaic dispensation, as refuse to admit that atonement was, by divine appointment, its principal end. The Book of Leviticus, which chiefly treats of the sacrificial ritual of the Jews, opens with these words, "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.

* Exod. xxiv. 6—12.

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:—and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."*

The original term כפר, rendered atonement in the Old Testament, in its primary sense, signifies to cover: and hence in several passages of Scripture (Nehem. iv. 45; Psal. xxxii. 1; lxxxv. 2.) the pardon of sin is metaphorically expressed by its being covered. Whatever therefore furnished just cause or occasion of forgiveness, concealed, or removed sin from the view of Him who was offended, and thus propitiated his favour, and effected a reconciliation. Hence the design of an atonement was to avert the displeasure of God from the sinner, and so to pacify him that his sin might be pardoned. Accordingly, it was prescribed that when a man was guilty of a violation of the divine law, he should confess that he had sinned in that thing, "and he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord for the sins which he hath sinned, and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin."

* See Levit. ch. i. v. 1—end; v. 5, 6; vi. 7; xvi. 6, 34, &c.

The things of which the burnt-offering, a propitiatory sacrifice, consisted, varied according to the ability of the offerer, and might be of the herd or of the flock, or of fowls ;* but in every case the offering was to be the best of its kind, a male without blemish. It was required that the offerer should bring the animal to be slain in sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, and put his hand on the head of his offering, to signify his sense of personal sin, to acknowledge his dependance on the divine mercy, his thankful acquiescence in the divinely instituted method of obtaining an interest in this mercy by propitiatory sacrifice, and his hope of acceptance founded on vicarious sufferings. The victim which was thus substituted in room of the actual transgressor, after its blood was sprinkled upon the altar, was consumed with fire, to afford a representation of that death which is the wages of sin, and of that death which was to be endured by the Saviour of sinners. An atonement was thus made for the offender by means of which he obtained, in the first place, the remission of those temporal penalties which the Jews incurred by the violation of their law; and, in the second place, when the sacrifice was presented in the faith of that one sacrifice for sin which the burnt-offerings of the law typically

* The only birds that were allowed to be offered at the altar were turtle doves or young pigeons. They aptly typified the holy harmless Saviour.

signified, he enjoyed spiritual forgiveness and acceptance with God.

Burnt-offerings were presented, partly, in the name of the whole nation, daily, every morning and evening, and on the sabbath the number was doubled: as also in connexion with a sin-offering on the great day of atonement; and on the three principal anniversary festivals;—partly in the solemnities of consecration to office;—and partly by private persons in order to be freed" from the guilt of moral delinquency and from ceremonial disqualification. The trespass-offering and sin-offering, were sacrifices offered for such transgressions as were not punishable by the laws of the state, that is, for such violations of express prohibitions, as if committed *presumptuously* were punishable with death, or which were known only to the conscience of the individual. Irrespectively of those frequent occasions in which they were enjoined to be offered, they were presented, "when the high priest had committed an offence, and thereby had brought guilt upon the whole nation: or, when the whole nation had committed an offence through ignorance, and afterwards repented;* or, on the great day of atonement for the high priest and the nation."

* This might happen, when through sinful inattention to the law, some prohibition of the ceremonial institutions was generally violated, and thus national guilt was incurred. In such a case, the Elders as the representatives of all Israel, and as the principals in the crime, were commanded to lay their

On this great anniversary, atonement was publicly made for all the sins, transgressions, and iniquities of the people, whether committed against the moral or ceremonial law, provided they were not of a nature to render void the covenant made at Horeb. The solemnities observed on this occasion were impressive and awful. The high priest, in obedience to the divine command, made atonement for himself, for the people, for the altar, and for the sanctuary; to intimate, not only that human nature is defiled, but that every thing with which it has connexion is in consequence polluted. Having first made atonement for himself and for his house, he took a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and brought it within the vail, so that the cloud of the incense covered the mercy-seat. He then took the blood of the young bullock which he had presented for a sin-offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat eastward, and before the mercy-seat, seven times. Afterwards he killed the goat of the sin-offering for the people, and brought his blood within the vail, and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat: to make an atonement for the holy place, because of the unclean-

hands on the sin-offerings, in acknowledgment of their own sin, and the sin of the people, and in humble supplication that their guilt might be expiated, and the divine displeasure appeased by this propitiatory sacrifice. See Levit. iv. 13—22.

ness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins. In continuation of this solemn sacrifice, he was to lead forth the other goat denominated the scape-goat, to lay his hands on the head of the goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat; and he sent the animal, thus bearing the sins of the people, into the wilderness. The ceremony of the scape-goat being thus conjoined with the sin-offering, as the concluding part of the process, was evidently intended to teach by a symbolical action which could not be misunderstood, that the atonement consisted in the removal of the sins of the people to the animal destined to bear them. "For the imposition of hands, and the confession and the implied translation of sins upon the victim, being usual in the sacrifice of animals in expiation; and this ceremony being omitted in the case of the goat that was slain, whilst it was employed in the case of the goat that was sent away; decidedly prove, that both animals were designed to be considered as one offering, and that the latter consequently, represented Him who was to bear the sins of Israel, and by his sufferings to expiate and to remove them." That both the goats constituted one offering is declared by Moses (Levit. xvi. 5.) "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats *for a sin-offering*."

It was thus publicly and impressively shewn, that before God pardons sin, and admits sinners into his favour, he transfers their sins to Him on whom he has laid the iniquities of us all. It was manifested that reconciliation between God and mankind was to be effected only by a propitiatory sacrifice; that his mercy could not reach them but through his atoning blood whom the mercy-seat prefigured, in whom God is well pleased, and in whom he has revealed himself as the God of peace.

The sacrifice of the passover, also furnished to the Israelites instruction of a similar nature concerning the way of salvation. It was instituted before they had left Egypt, to commemorate their deliverance from bondage, and to typify the greater redemption to be procured by the blood of Christ. It is called the *passover* in consideration of the passing over of Jehovah, who spared the Israelites when he smote the first-born of the Egyptians. The words in which the Lord first made the communication of it to Moses, are, "It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you for destruction, whilst I smite the land of Egypt."* When Moses

* Exod. xii.

instructs them (ver. 27.) as to the manner in which they are to explain the rite to their posterity, he desires them to say, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."*

In no previous sacrificial institution was the atonement made by the Son of God more fully manifested by symbolical representation; nor the necessity more clearly pointed out of those dispositions of penitence, self-renunciation, and reliance upon God, with which the sacrifice of the cross ought always to be viewed. It signified to the Israelites, that though they were deserving of the divine displeasure, they were preserved, not in consequence of their own righteousness, but by the mercy of God exercised through a propitiatory sacrifice. They were directed to take a lamb or a kid for every household, unless when the number of persons in a family was so small as to render it proper that they should join with their neighbours. The lamb was to be a male of the first year, without blemish, to typify the perfect purity of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It was slain on the fourteenth day of the first month, between three o'clock in the afternoon and sunset, in the presence of the whole congregation of Israel, and by the head of each household. In like manner, Christ, our

* Exodus, ch. xii.

passover, was sacrificed for us, if not on the same day, at least in the midst, and at the request, of the assembled congregation of the Jews; and he expired about the hour when the paschal lamb was sacrificed. The blood was sprinkled, with a bunch of hyssop, on the side-posts, and upper door-posts of the houses in which the passover was eaten, as a token of the preservation of Israel, when the first-born of Egypt were destroyed; and doubtless to signify that redemption which men obtain through the efficacy of the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread, to denote the sincerity and truth of the worshippers; with bitter herbs, as an emblem of the godly sorrow, the deep repentance, the mortification of corrupt desires, which accompany the exercise of genuine faith in Christ. The roasting of the paschal lamb by fire, the only way in which they were allowed to prepare it, might signify the divine wrath due to sin, and the sufferings of Him who appeased that wrath by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. They were to eat the passover in a standing posture, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, to denote their begun deliverance and readiness to depart;—expressive of the Christian's redemption, and of his pilgrimage to the heavenly land under the guidance of his Saviour. Many of the Israelites probably rested in the outward observance,

which was the commemoration of the miraculous deliverance of their nation; but the spiritual worshippers would discover in the divinely instituted rite, the redemption by the promised Messiah which it was designed to prefigure.

That the paschal lamb was thus a type of Christ is expressly asserted by the evangelist John, and by the apostle Paul. John xix. 36. 1 Cor. v. 7. In the words of the latter, that Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us, it is affirmed, that the passover was a sacrifice; and that, in the known and usual sense of the terms, Christ is said to be sacrificed for us.

Notwithstanding, however, it has been alleged by Dr. Priestley, and other writers of his school, that the passover was not a sacrifice in the real and primary sense of the word, because "there was no priest employed upon the occasion; no altar made use of; no burning; nor any part offered to the Lord: all which circumstances were essential to every proper sacrifice." As a refutation of these unfounded assertions, it is only necessary to allude to those passages of Scripture which expressly contradict them. First, the passover is directly called a sacrifice in the following passages of Scripture; Exod. xii. 27; xxiii. 18; xxxiv. 25; Deut. xvi. 2, 4, 5, 6. Secondly, the paschal lamb was an offering brought to the tabernacle or temple; as was enjoined, Deut. xvi. 2, 5, 6. "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of

the flock, and the herd, in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there. Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt." This injunction we find exemplified at the solemn passover in the reign of Josiah, 2 Chronicles xxxv. 5, 6, 10, 11. Thirdly, the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled at the altar by the priests, in the same manner as the blood of the victims usually slain in sacrifice. Exod. xxiii. 18; xxxiv. 25; 2 Chron. xxx. 15, 16; xxxv. 11. Fourthly, the fat and entrails were burned on the altar: as appears from the texts already referred to.

It is true, the person who brought the paschal lamb to the tabernacle or temple killed it, and not the priest; but this was not peculiar to the passover: for it is evident, from Levit. i. 4, 5; iii. 2; iv. 24. that in the several instances of the burnt-offering, the peace-offering, and the sin-offering, the individual who presented it might kill the sacrifice. If the ceremony of the imposition of hands upon the head of the victim, which was usual in piacular sacrifices, was not employed in that of the passover, the reason appears to have been, that "the paschal lamb was the sacrifice of a company;

and where a company are concerned, no one can act for the whole, unless there be a proper representative."*

Thus, it appears, that the passover was a real sacrifice: and are we not warranted, by the testimony of the Apostle, (1 Cor. v. 7.) to believe, that what the passover was to the Jews, the death of Christ is to us, a proper and efficacious sacrifice? If the blood of their sacrifice when sprinkled upon the door-posts of their houses was to them the symbol of safety,—the signal of distinction between them and the Egyptians, the blood of the Lamb of God, a nobler sacrifice, has efficacy to deliver us from the wrath to come. Though the blood of the paschal lamb had no inherent virtue in itself to preserve the families on whose door-posts it was sprinkled from destruction; and though God required no such sign to distinguish the houses of the Israelites; the divine wisdom is apparent in the institution of an ordinance specially intended to be a typical representation of that protection from avenging justice, that eternal redemption, procured by the blood of Christ.

From these observations it appears that a main design of the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation was to make atonement for sin. It also appears that propitiatory sacrifices were accompanied with the circumstances specified in the following section.

* Sykes' Essay on Sacrifices, p. 41.

SECT. III.

On the leading Circumstances which accompanied the Offering of Propitiatory Sacrifice.

I. The victims intended to be offered in sacrifice were brought to the tabernacle; and might be, and often were, slain by the offerer. Lev. ch. i. &c. In general, the peace-offerings and burnt-offerings were voluntary oblations: but some of the sin-offerings were appointed at stated seasons, and others were required in particular cases; while all the trespass-offerings were occasional.

II. The offerer laid his hands on the head of the victim, to signify that his sins were symbolically transferred to the sacrifice, so that he escaped the evils due to his transgressions. In this ceremony there was an acknowledgment of the evil and desert of sin; of the justice of God in its punishment; that death is its due reward; that God is merciful and gracious, and willing to pardon; that his pardoning mercy is thankfully accepted of in the only way in which it can be extended, through the sufferings of a piacular victim; that this victim he voluntarily offered unto God in substitution of himself, and that he cordially acquiesced in the punitive acts of divine justice. The form prescribed for the individual presenting his own sacrifice, as handed down to us by the Jewish writers, and

as given by Outram,* is in accordance with this solemn acknowledgment: "O God, I have sinned, I have committed iniquity, I have rebelled: thus, and thus have I done. But I return in repentance to thy presence; and be this my expiation."

That this was the import of the imposition of hands on the head of the victim, joined as this ceremony always was to the confession of sin, we learn from the explanation given of it in Leviticus xvi. 21, 22. "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat,—and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities." As the consequence of this transference of the sins of the people to the goat, it was reckoned so unclean that its pollution extended even to the person appointed to convey it into the wilderness. In this way the sins of Israel were expiated, and removed into oblivion. In like manner, the sins of his people were imputed to the great Saviour and Surety.

Nor is it any objection to this view of the import of the symbolical action in question to allege, that this ceremony was not confined to piacular sacrifices, but was also used in those which were eucharistical, in which commemoration was made, not of sin, but of mercies. For, "in order to prove that it was not

* Outram De Sacr. lib. i. cap. xv. § 8.

attended with acknowledgment of sin, in sacrifices not piacular, it is necessary to show, that in none but piacular was there any reference whatever to sin. In these, indeed, the pardon of sin is the appropriate object; but that in our expressions of praise and thanksgiving acknowledgment should be made of our own unworthiness and of the general desert of sin, seems not unreasonable. That even the eucharistic sacrifices, then, might bear some relation to sin, especially if animal sacrifice in its first institution was designed to represent that death which had been introduced by sin, will perhaps not be deemed improbable. And in confirmation of this, it is certain, that the Jewish doctors combine, in all cases, confession of sins, with imposition of hands." "Where there is no confession of sins," say they, "there is no imposition of hands."* Hence the frequent occurrence in the sacred volume of the expression, "His blood shall be on his own head." (Lev. xx. 9—11; 1 Kings ii. 37; Psalm vii. 16; Matth. xxvii. 25; Acts v. 29.) The expression undoubtedly signified the laying of guilt on the animal or person, in regard to whom the ceremony of imposition of hands took place; by transference in the case of a sin-offering, and immediately and directly in the case of a blasphemer, when it was performed by the witnesses.

III. Substitution and vicarious suffering were in-

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 367.

volved in the offering of propitiatory sacrifice. The individual who brought the victim to the tabernacle to be presented to God as an atonement for him, felt and acknowledged that the death inflicted on the animal represented the punishment due to his sins; that the victim slain suffered in consequence of his guilt, so that he was released from the punishment due to his transgressions. This is clearly taught in the words, (Levit. i. 4.) "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." To show that the life of the victim offered in sacrifice was given for the offender, so that he might escape the punishment to which he was liable, the blood, in which is the life, was sprinkled at the altar to make an atonement.

It has been attempted to found an objection to the vicarious import of the propitiatory sacrifices of the law, on the circumstance, that in the case of extreme poverty, remission of sins could be obtained without the shedding of blood. But even the provision which was made for this exception, rather strengthened than invalidated the general rule of the law, and showed the necessity of vicarious suffering as an atonement. When from poverty a man was unable to offer a lamb, or a pair of turtle doves, for his transgression, he was to make the nearest approach to the law in his power, by offering some fine flour, the bread by which the life of man is sustained, a part of which was to be

burned on the altar, to intimate that he had forfeited his own life, and all by which it was supported. Nor was even this individual excluded from propitiatory sacrifice by the shedding of blood; for he, together with all Israel, knew that they had a personal interest in the sacrifices which were offered for all the sins of all the people on the day of atonement.

IV. It was essential to a propitiatory sacrifice under the Mosaic dispensation, that a priest should offer it to God. This constitution, while it was calculated to impress the worshipper with a sense of his unfitness to approach a holy God, was designed to typify Him who is a priest for ever; who, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. The institution of the priestly office we have in Exod. xxviii.

V. The end of a propitiatory sacrifice was the expiation of guilt. It ought to be recollected that guilt might be contracted by the violation of the positive or ceremonial law, as well as of the moral. For, although many of the rites which the Israelites were enjoined to observe were previously to this injunction indifferent; they instantly changed their nature when the command of God enacted their observance; and their observance or non-observance became moral or immoral actions, in consequence of their being appointed by him, who is infinitely good, and wise, and powerful, and to whose laws, wise and good as they must

always be, we owe an unceasing obedience. The obligation to obedience in such a case arises from the immutable and eternal right of the Creator to issue laws, and to command the obedience of his intelligent creatures. Had there been no reason, from the nature of the thing, for obeying the will of the only wise God, the creator and preserver of all things, it is certain that the exercise of mere arbitrary will could have induced no obligation. Will and law signify nothing, and are nothing, abstractedly from something previous to them, in the character of the Lawgiver, and the relations of beings to one another, to give them force, and render disobedience a crime.

But this important consideration is altogether overlooked by those, who, with unfriendly views to the doctrine of atonement, argue, that those sins and iniquities for which it is in several instances expressly said, that forgiveness was procured by the atonement, do not, in the language of the Old Testament, necessarily imply a deviation from moral rectitude, or a transgression of the moral law, but are frequently used when nothing more can be understood than a privation of that bodily purity which the ceremonial law required. Thus, we read of the iniquity of the sanctuary, and of the iniquity of the holy things: (Numb. xviii. 1; Exod. xxviii. 38.) and we find the ashes of the burnt heifer, though applied only for the purification of external uncleanness, expressly called the ashes of the burnt-

heifer of purification for sin: (Numb. xix. 7.) and in like manner, the oblation required from him who had recovered from a leprosy, a sin-offering: "the unclean person, though free from blame in a moral point of view, yet in the eye of the law being deemed a sinner."

The answer to this is, 1st, That every deviation from the requirements of the ceremonial law, being a violation of unquestionable obligation to obedience, rendered the offender morally blameworthy: 2dly, The expressions, iniquity of holy things—iniquity of the sanctuary, refer to persons making an improper use of holy things, and not to the things themselves; and thus the objection falls to the ground. (Numb. xviii. 1, &c.) And, 3dly, With regard to the application of the term sin and sin-offering, to persons labouring under mere corporeal impurities and distempers, the answer is given at length in the following section.

But it is farther urged, by those who oppose the doctrine of atonement, that the sins for which atonements were appointed under the law, were at most but sins of ignorance, to which scarcely any moral character could attach, and which deserved to be ranked in the same class with mere natural or accidental infirmities.

The word *ignorance*, when used in such cases by the Hebrew legislator, is to be understood as signifying, not such a want of knowledge as freed from moral blame, but the absence of such circumstances as con-

stituted what the law termed *presumptuous sin.* The expression as it occurs in Numb. xv. 22—28, is directly opposed in verse 30, to sinning with a high hand, that is, deliberately and presumptuously. It would seem to imply "a full and entire engrossment of mind and affection, producing a temporary oblivion of what is right, which is nothing more than the common effect of any passion on the mind." No Israelite, indeed, could plead absolute ignorance of the law which was so often promulgated in his hearing, and which he was commanded to make the subject of habitual study.

The distinction here alluded to, indicated under the law by using the word *ignorance* in contradistinction to *presumptuous*, is recognised throughout scripture. Thus, in Acts iii. 13—19, the Apostle Peter, after charging the Jews with the guilt of having denied the Son of God, in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go, and of having killed the Prince of Life, adds, "And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." The Apostle Paul also (1 Cor. ii. 8.) ascribes the crucifixion of our Lord, by the Jews, to ignorance. He attributes the crimes of the Gentiles to the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart. (Eph. iv. 18.) He even says that the sin which he himself had committed when he opposed the gospel, and inflicted all manner of injury on its disciples,

was occasioned by his ignorance: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. i. 12—16.)

It is thus certain, as might be farther proved by numerous passages, that sins of ignorance were all those sins which were not of the class of presumptuous, or such as by the law were necessarily to be punished with death. The former proceeded from human frailty, the latter from a deliberate and audacious opposition to the divine authority—such an opposition as tended to render void the covenant made at Horeb. "The priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." (Numb. xv. 27—32. See also Exod. xxi. 14; xviii. 11; Deut. i. 42, 43; xvii. 12, 13; xviii. 22.) For all sins of ignorance, that is, for all sins which sprung from the ordinary infirmities and passions of human nature, in addition to the special atonements provided by the law, expiation was made by the high priest when he

went into the holy place "once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors (ignorances αγνοημαται) of the people."* Yet, what are here called errors, are elsewhere denominated sins, iniquities, and transgressions;† they were consequently moral offences. They were not involuntary defects and mistakes merely; but they included voluntary deviations from the law of God.

That this is the just view of what are called sins of ignorance, is farther evident from this, that it was impossible for a man to be guilty of the crimes of fraud, perjury, injustice, and debauchery,—offences of a moral nature surely, and for which atonement was to be made,—it was impossible for a man to be guilty of these crimes without a consciousness of the sins committed. These, it is acknowledged, are cases of "known and open wickedness," which render it "certain that there were sacrifices under the law appointed to make atonement for moral evil, and for moral guilt."

But still, it is contended, with the view of doing away with the propitiatory and vicarious nature of the legal sacrifices, that no atonement was provided for sins by which life was forfeited. No objection has ever been advanced against the doctrine of atonement more futile and sophistical than this. It is certain, indeed, that according to the constitution of the

* Heb. ix. 7. † Levit. xvi. 21.

Mosaic economy, there were sins for which no expiation could be made. These were murder, Numb. xxxv. 30, 31; adultery, Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22; incest, Lev. xviii. 29; idolatry, Deut. xvii. 2—7; blasphemy, Lev. xxiv. 15, 16; sabbath breaking, Numb. xv. 35, 36; and such an audacious defiance of the authority of God, and despising of his law, as constituted presumptuous sin, Numb. xv. 30, 31. "In these cases, the transgressor himself was to die, and a beast was not sacrificed for him. For other sins an atonement was accepted, and hence the transgressor being forgiven, continued in life. From this, however, it will not follow that in these cases there was no forfeiture of life. In the cases of murder, adultery, &c. the forfeiture was absolute, no atonement being accepted, and therefore no remission given, unless in virtue of the sovereignty of God. (2 Sam. xii. 13.) In other instances, the forfeiture was conditional, that is, the transgressor incurred the penalty of the law, which was death, unless he offered the appointed sacrifices. Let us suppose the thief, Lev. vi. 1—7; the unclean, chap. xix. 20—22; or the person who had come to the knowledge of his sin committed ignorantly, Lev. iv. 13—20; had refused to make the atonement enjoined in the law, what would have been the consequence? As despisers of the law, they would have died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. That this would undoubtedly have been

the case, appears both from analogy, and from the promise of forgiveness made to such as offered the appointed sacrifices. The uncircumcised was to be cut off from the people of the Lord, Gen. xvii. 14; whosoever ate any manner of blood, Lev. xvii. 10; whosoever did not afflict his soul on the day of atonement, Lev. xxiii. 29; he who in certain cases neglected to eat the passover, Numb. ix. 13; the unclean who did not purify himself, Numb. xix. 20. And hence, we may infer, those also who did not offer the sacrifices appointed by God. This is likewise evident from the promise of forgiveness. It was always made on condition that they sacrificed. The promise of forgiveness being made to such only as offered sacrifice, is a certain proof that those who omitted sacrifice should not be forgiven, but that their sins should be upon them, and accordingly they should die."*

Hence, the law denounced death against every violation of it. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law annexed death to the crimes of perjury and of profane swearing; and yet a remission of the penalty in regard to these offences might be obtained by making the appointed atonements, (Lev. vi. 3; v. 4; Exod. xx. 7; Lev. xxiv. 16.) It was not necessary to denounce death in those cases

* Bell's Strictures on M'Gill's Essay on the Death of Christ, p. 252.

in which the sentence of the law was arrested, and the consequences of transgression averted, by prescribed atonements. The whole strength of the present objection rests upon this; that we have not both the atonement prescribed, and the punishment denounced; that is, the punishment both remitted and denounced at the same time.

The effect of atonement in every case was a remission of the penalty annexed to the offence for which propitiatory sacrifice was offered. The guilt of the offender was expiated by the animal sacrifice which was presented to God on his behalf; and the punishment to which he had become liable, and which otherwise he would have suffered, was by this divinely appointed means averted. For, though it operated only to the remission of temporal punishment, and only prefigured that great propitiation which saves from eternal, it possessed typically and ceremonially all the properties of an atonement, and its effect on the present comfort of the person who enjoyed the advantage of it was real. The legal sacrifices had this effect when presented in obedience to God, the Head and Sovereign of the Jewish state and polity; and when offered in the faith of the atonement of the promised Redeemer, the offerer participated in the efficacy of that blood which "cleanseth from all sin."

It thus clearly appears, that the ancient sacrifices

were intended to expiate sins, whether committed against the ceremonial or the moral law, which were not of a presumptuous nature;—that the offerer laid his hands on the head of the piacular victim, in acknowledgment of his sin, and of his desert;—that the victim was substituted in his room to bear his punishment, and that the life of the animal was given for the life which had been forfeited by transgression.

It is to be observed, however, "that whereas the law of Moses was appointed to be the rule of the political government of the people, wherein many sins, such as adultery and murder, were to be punished with death, and the sinner was to be cut off, there were in such cases no sacrifices appointed, nor admitted: but in the sacrifice of Christ there is no exception made of any sin, in those that repent, believe, and forsake their sins; particularly, not of those which were excepted in the law of Moses. (Acts xiii. 39.) So that as the sin-offering was provided for all sin that disannulled not the covenant made at Horeb, which allowed no life nor interest in its blessings to murderers, adulterers, blasphemers, and the like, in the typical land; so the sacrifice of Christ is extended to all sinners who transgress not the terms and tenour of the new covenant, for whom no place is allowed either in the church here, or heaven hereafter."*

* Owen on Hebrews, vol. i. p. 559.

SECT. IV.

On the Provision made by the Sacrifices of the Law for the Purification of the Worshipper.

II. While the main design of the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation was to make atonement for sin, there was provision made by them for the removal both of moral and ceremonial defilement. In an age of the world when the human mind was familiar with symbols, it cannot surprise us that purification from ceremonial pollution was designed to be a representation of the sanctification of the soul. The diseases of the body were associated with sin, and regarded as inflicted on account of it: and hence the expiation of the guilt of sin was felt to be necessary to deliverance from these, and all its other consequences. The very loathsomeness of a distemper was made use of to indicate the odiousness of sin.

Leprosy, and the laws relating to it, in this view, merit attention. This disorder, which was not supposed to be communicated by contagion, but to be inflicted directly by the hand of God, was regarded as a punishment for sin. Miriam was smitten with it for her rebellion against Moses; and Gehazi, for his covetousness and falsehood. It was extremely loathsome; so much so, that if a doubt were entertained that it really existed in any particular instance, the person suspected of being affected with it was secluded from society

till the point was determined. It was incurable by human means, and thus signified, that by no devices of man, can the evil of sin be removed; that the remedy of divine appointment alone can prove efficacious in delivering from its guilt, in washing away its pollution, and in eradicating its influence. The leper was prohibited all intercourse even with his dearest relations, and he was obliged to live alone: and his case shadowed forth the incapacity of the unpardoned and impenitent sinner to hold communion with God, or with his church.

It was enjoined, that two birds should be taken for the leper; one of which was to be killed over a vessel of spring water; and the other, dipped in bloody water, was to be let loose. This divinely instituted ceremony was designed to be instructive: the dipping of the living bird in the blood of that which was killed might intimate, that all which Christ should do for us after his resurrection was founded on the sacrifice which he offered: and that his power to justify, and to send forth the influences of his Spirit, rested upon this propitiation. The mixing of the blood with spring, or living water might be intended to signify, the necessity of the washing of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Ghost, to our deliverance from the power and pollution of sin. The typical uses of the two birds presented by the leper seem to be perfectly similar to those of the two goats which were offered on the day of atonement; the one shadowed forth the Redeemer as dying for

our sins; the other as rising again for our justification.

It was not till there was an actual application of the blood and water seven times to the leper that he was pronounced to be clean. Nor was he even then restored to his place and privileges. He was to live alone for seven days more, and again to wash his body and his clothes, before he could be admitted to the comforts and fellowship of society. He was then to present himself to the priest, and a sacrifice was to be offered for him to the Lord. "He shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three-tenth deals of fine flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil. And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall take one he-lamb and offer him for a trespass-offering.—And the priest shall offer the sin-offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterwards he shall kill the burnt-offering: and the priest shall offer the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean."* There was here a propitiatory sacrifice for sin united to a meat-offering;—to shew that the guilt of sin must be expiated before its pollu-

* Levit. xiv.

tion could be removed; that the sanctification of our nature must be preceded by reconciliation with God through the atonement. There was an application of the blood of the sacrifice which had been presented to God, together with oil, to the head, the hand, and the foot, of the leper, to intimate that as the guilt of his sin was removed by expiation, its defilement also was to be washed away, and he was henceforth to be consecrated to the service of God.

Certain writers, unfriendly to the doctrine of atonement for sin, have argued, that because atonements were made by the sacrifice of animals in this and in other cases where, as they think, no guilt was involved, the notion of propitiation and of substitution was not connected with animal sacrifice: in other words, because there were atonements said to be made by animal sacrifice in cases which did not, as they suppose, involve moral guilt, there was, therefore, no real expiation of guilt, no proper atonement made in any case. But these writers do not recollect that for persons who are said to be conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, whose righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and who daily sin, and come short of the glory of God, a propitiatory sacrifice is necessary, even when they are not chargeable with open crimes. Accordingly, there were daily sacrifices, morning and evening, and annual sacrifices, appointed *for all the sins of all the people* of Israel. They were mercifully

ordained on other occasions also for the purpose of obtaining a remission of penalties incurred by a breach of the laws of the state, as well as for procuring through faith in the atonement which they prefigured peace and acceptance with God.

With regard to the cases in which propitiatory sacrifices were appointed for persons who were not chargeable with crime, as in the instances of the leper, and of women after child-bearing, they were evidently intended to bring sin, which is the source of all suffering, to remembrance; to show that deliverance could not be obtained from its effects without previous redemption through an atoning sacrifice from its guilt; and that all who were thus redeemed were purified and consecrated to God. The whole sacrificial ritual of the Mosaic economy was indeed so framed as continually and impressively to exhibit the great truth to the view of the people, that the expiation of sin by an atoning sacrifice was essentially requisite to the obtaining of deliverance from its power, pollution, and penal consequences. If certain things were fixed on as ceremonial defilements, or disqualifications for drawing near to God in the observance of the ordinances of his worship, which could only be removed by propitiatory sacrifice; the design evidently was to teach, not merely that without holiness no man can see the Lord, but that the holiness required can only be obtained through the blood of

atonement. If, in order to heal certain distempers of the body, it was necessary to make atonement by sacrifice, and to sprinkle the blood of atonement on the person healed,—was it not made manifest, that before the effects of sin can be removed and averted, its guilt must be expiated, the divine justice satisfied, and God be reconciled? Is not this doctrine a leading theme of divine revelation? Is it not clearly taught by the Apostle in the following words, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith?"*

III. The effect of atonement for sin in regard to sinners is, not merely the pardon of their offences, and the purification of their nature, but their consecration to God. Accordingly, when Israel were taken into covenant with God, and separated from the world for his service, atoning sacrifices were offered unto God, and sprinkled upon the people, as well as upon the altar, to signify, that the expiation of their sins, implied, required, and provided for, their dedication to the glory of their Maker. "Now, therefore, said God unto them, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people;—and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."† In like manner, when Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the

* Gal. iii. 13, 14. † Exod. xix. 5, 6.

priestly office, they were not only sanctified and set apart by the anointing of oil, but a bullock was offered for a sin-offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for a sin-offering, in acknowledgment of their sin, and to express their desire that by the vicarious and symbolical suffering of the victim their guilt might be expiated, and that they might be thus fitted for drawing near unto God. They were separated by the blood of atonement for holy purposes, and specially consecrated to the honour and service of God.

Are not all who are justified, sanctified, and washed, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, said to be made kings and priests? Does not the apostle Peter thus address all who are saved by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation?"

SECT. V.

On the different Sacrifices of the Mosaic Dispensation.

In addition to the observations already made, it may be proper that we should here take further notice of the distinctive properties of the sacrifices of the law. These sacrifices, in general, as was formerly remarked, were divinely appointed from the beginning; and they

were now again enjoined by the authority of Heaven, freed from the superstitious practices which had been connected with them.

The piacular sacrifices were, the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, the trespass-offering, and the peace-offering. Whether there was any thing of a propitiatory nature in any other of the sacrifices of the law, it is not necessary here to determine. It is certain that those which I have mentioned were properly piacular, and were designed to make atonement for sin.

Concerning the first of these, burnt-offering (עולה hola) some observations were made in the second section of this chapter. That it was known and observed before the giving of the law, the terms made use of when it is made a part of the Levitical ritual abundantly prove (Lev. i. 1—8.) Abel, Noah, and Job, had offered this sacrifice unto God. Accordingly the knowledge of this was preserved after the dispersion of mankind; and associated with superstitious observances, it continued to form a part of the religious service which the heathen presented to their gods. The end of this sacrifice, as appointed by God, and as observed by Israel, was to make atonement. In later times, the Emperor Augustus directed to be offered for himself a daily sacrifice of two lambs and a bull.

The next sacrifice was the sin-offering, the laws and rites of which are described, Lev. iv. Our Lord, in several passages of the New Testament, is said to have

been made a sin-offering.* The matter of this offering has been noticed already, and is mentioned in the chapter of Leviticus just referred to. It was provided for the whole congregation, the rulers, the priests, or any of the people. All had an interest in it; as all who choose may participate in the blessings procured by that atoning sacrifice which the sin-offering typified. It was frequently offered by divine command on solemn and appointed occasions for the whole congregation of Israel: as on every new moon:—on the fifteenth day of the first month, and seven days together during the feast of unleavened bread:—at the feast of the first-fruits;—at the feast of trumpets: on the day of expiation: on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and for eight days together during the feast of tabernacles. "And the frequent repetition of this sacrifice was to intimate that nothing was accepted with God, but on the account of what was prefigured thereby, namely, that perfect sacrifice which took away the sin of the world.

"The principal ceremony in the manner of its oblation, was the disposal of the blood. For the blood of this sacrifice was disposed of in three ways. The greater part of the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offerings, in the court before the door of the tabernacle. A part of it was taken and carried by the high priest into the sanctuary, and put

* Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21.

upon the horns of the altar of incense, that was therein, Lev. iv. 7. The third part (which was first disposed of) was to be carried into the most holy place, as it was done accordingly on the day of expiation, Lev. xvi. But because it was not lawful for him to enter in thither but once in the year, namely, on that day, at all other times he dipped his finger in the blood, and sprinkled it seven times towards the veil, that parted the most holy place from the sanctuary, Lev. iv. 6. So that every place of the tabernacle, and all that pertained to it, were sanctified with this blood; even as Jesus Christ who was represented in all this, was dedicated unto God in his own blood, the blood of the covenant. Heb. x. 29."* Seven being the number of perfection, the sprinkling of the blood seven times denoted the perfect cleansing of sin by the blood of Christ, which in allusion to this is called the blood of sprinkling.†

The trespass-offering differed but little from the sin-offering. In many cases both these sacrifices were united: and in every instance in which either was offered, there was an acknowledgment of sin. While the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled upon the horns of the altar, that of the trespass-offering was sprinkled about the altar.‡ The word which is rendered trespass-offering signifies also trespass, as the

* Owen on Heb. vol. i. p. 561. † Heb. xii. 24.
‡ Lev. iv. 25, 30.

word sin-offering signifies also sin. " All the cases in which trespass-offerings were appointed, may be referred to the following heads: First, transgressions of the ritual law, by oversight or surprise. When a man discovered his offence in this case, he was required to bring a trespass-offering, as guilty, and needing an atonement and forgiveness from God, (Lev. v. 2, 3.) The trespass-offering of the leper seems to have been of this nature; for amidst the various and exact rules laid down for his conduct, it could hardly be supposed that he had never once deviated from any of them, at least by oversight; and that required in a particular case of the Nazarite, was evidently of this kind, (Num. vi. 9—12.) Secondly, such as were appointed when a man had violated the moral law, in some particular which was injurious to his neighbour; even if he had sinned wilfully and knowingly, provided some circumstances of the case exempted him from punishment by the magistrate, (Lev. vi. 2—7. xix. 20—22.) Thirdly, such as were required, where an inadvertent infringement of a moral precept, of the first table, might also prove injurious to man. Lastly, such as were appointed for trespasses inadvertently committed in holy things, which violated both the ritual and moral law, and were a robbery of God and an injustice to the priests, (Mal. iii. 8, 9.) The burnt-offerings were typical atonements for sin in

general, especially against the moral law; but these were superadded on particular occasions."*

The trespass-offering, as well as the sin-offering, was intended to make atonement for sin. Concerning the sin-offering, it was expressly ordained that the bodies of the victims whose blood was offered for sin, should be burned without the camp. "No sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought unto the tabernacle of the congregation, to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire." There was special reference in this statute to the sin-offering presented by the high priest for himself, and for the whole congregation on the day of annual atonement. On that solemn occasion, the blood of the animals slain in sacrifice, was carried by the high priest within the veil, where, in obedience to the divine appointment, he sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and thus made atonement for the transgressions of Israel. But the bodies of those beasts, whose blood was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, were burned without the camp. As things that were under the curse, they were devoted to utter destruction. In this respect, they represented Him who was made a curse for us, that by the sacrifice of himself he might redeem them that were under the curse of the law. Jesus

* Scot on Levit. v.

also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

With regard to the peace-offering, the matter of it was the same as that of the burnt-offerings. It was ordained to be offered at the consecration of a priest; (Exod. xxix. 2); at the purification of a leper, (Lev. xiv. 3); at the expiration of a Nazaritical vow (Num. vi. 14); at the solemn dedication of the tabernacle and temple. While the burnt-offerings were wholly consumed on the altar, the peace-offering was divided between the altar, the priests, and the offerer; and constituted at once an atonement for sin, and a feast of reconciliation. It might intimate that all the blessings which we enjoy come to us through the sacrifice of the Redeemer; that even the value of our temporal blessings is enhanced as they are the fruit of his mediation.

I. It appears that the other piacular sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation were superadded to the burnt-offering, which, from the entrance of sin into the world, was a divinely instituted typical atonement for sin.

II. The number of piacular sacrifices under the law, and the frequency of their repetition, were designed to impress the mind with this great truth of the gospel, that without shedding of blood there is no remission. The law was thus preparatory to the gospel: our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. The

continual burnt-offering which was presented every morning and evening throughout the year, was specially designed to teach Israel that they had always need of an atoning sacrifice, and that the sacrifice of the Redeemer which in due time was to be offered, possessed infinite virtue. The typical institutions were numerous and varied, for the purpose of teaching the ancient church, that redemption from sin was to be obtained only through the sacrifice and substitution of Christ.

CHAP. VII.

ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THE REALITY AND EFFICACY OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

HAVING seen that the institution of sacrifice before and under the law was designed to prefigure the expiatory sufferings of Christ, we shall now advert to the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures concerning this deeply important subject. I shall not, in this survey, include all the passages which are justly understood to refer to the sacrifice of the Redeemer: but shall confine myself to those which explicitly and undeniably foretell, in prophetic descriptions, his sufferings.

SECT. I.

On Gen. iii. 15; Psalm xxii. xl. cx.

To the import of the first promise in its bearing on this subject I have already alluded. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." To this passage, and to the circumstance which occasioned it, the following allusions in

the New Testament refer. "The serpent beguiled Eve by his subtlety:—that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world:—a murderer from the beginning. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.—Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

Will not he who is enlightened by the christian revelation, "perceive, that the seed of the woman is an image, not generally descriptive of the descendants of Adam, but characteristic of an individual—emphatically expressive of that Person, who, by the miraculous manner of his conception, was peculiarly and properly the Son of Eve;—that the wound to be suffered by this person in the heel, denotes the sufferings with which the devil and his emissaries were permitted to exercise the Captain of our salvation? And will he not discern in the accomplishment of man's redemption, and the successful propagation of the gospel, the mortal blow inflicted on the serpent's head?"* Will he not see a remarkable fulfilment of the prediction in those circumstances which the Apostle describes, when he says, that "Blotting out the

* Horsley's Sermons, Serm. xvi.

hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and taking it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."*

In compassion to the sinful parents of our race, God did not leave them long in doubt, and in solicitude concerning his designs of mercy. To relieve them from the emotions of shame, and perturbation and despair, he announced to them immediately after the fall the promise of a Redeemer. It was before either the man or the woman had heard their sentence, and it was probably with the view of preserving them from utter despondency when that sentence should be pronounced, that it pleased God previously to make known to them the salvation which he had provided. Though the language of the prediction is figurative, the meaning is obvious. It declares, that the Great Deliverer of our race should himself be a sufferer, though he should be victorious over his enemies: that he should be bruised through the instrumentality of Satan and his emissaries; but that he should overcome and destroy them.

The exposition of this first promise is given by our Lord himself, when, after contemplating the efficacy of his atoning death; the number of his disciples out of every kindred, people, and tongue; and the grow-

* Col. ii. 14, 15.

ing peace and happiness of a renovated world, he said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And, I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." The allusion to the prediction now under consideration, is so striking, that we cannot help thinking that he had it in his view when he uttered these words.*

The next passage which I shall notice as referring to the expiatory sufferings of Christ is the twenty-second Psalm: the first part of which is a prophetical description of his sufferings, as the last is to his glory. Of this we are assured by the testimony of our Lord who quotes the first verse on the cross; and by that of the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews.† It contains a prophetical history of our Lord's sufferings; and the circumstances recorded by the Evangelists furnish the best comment, as they point out the exact fulfilment of this striking series of predictions.

If the reader will look at this Psalm from the first to the twenty-second verse, and compare these verses with the narrative in the gospels, he cannot fail to be struck with the minute detail of this historical prophecy concerning the humiliation and atoning death of the Redeemer. After he is betrayed by Judas, he is apprehended like a malefactor, led bound before the high priest and Jewish rulers, where he is mocked,

* John xii. 31—33. † Math. xxvii. 46; Heb. ii. 12, 13.

spit upon, derided as an impostor, and condemned as a blasphemer;—he is conducted before Pilate, where he endured many indignities, and heard the multitude prefer a murderer to him;—he is sent to Herod who, with his men of war, set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate;—in whose presence he was treated with scorn and cruelty, the soldiers having scourged him, crowned him with thorns, clothed him with a purple robe, and smote him with their hands. The suffering Saviour was thus doomed to a lingering, painful, ignominious, and cursed death,—to bear his cross to Calvary, led between two thieves, and numbered with transgressors. On the cross he is reviled by the multitude, the rulers, the priests, the soldiers, and by one of the malefactors;—in exact accordance with the language of this Psalm. "I am a worm, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from earliest infancy. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have

beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me unto the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord; O my Strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword."

The expressions with which the Psalm opens are not only expressive of suffering, but of peculiar suffering, such as He only could feel who stood between sinful men and divine justice, and who endured the effect of the wrath of God due to us. "About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." From these words it is clear, in the first place, that the withdrawment of the light of God's countenance, and the sense of his frown, were the chief occasion of the sufferings of the Redeemer. His outward sufferings, severe and complicated as they were, he submitted to in silence: he endured the cross and despised the shame: but the agony produced by

the awful bereavement which he mourns, and by his experience of divine wrath, was so intense, as to occasion the exclamation, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? In the second place, the words of our Lord intimate, that "there was no cause in him why he should be thus forsaken." He was the Holy One of God: and even in that dreadful hour, his love to his Father, his confidence in him, and obedience to him, were unabated and perfect.

He must have suffered, therefore, not for any fault of his own, but for the offences of others. His death must have been a propitiatory sacrifice for those whose punishment he bore. He, in the language of inspiration, suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Thus did David, who was a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne; he seeing this before spake of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory that should follow.

We have the authority of the apostle Paul for regarding a part, if not the whole, of the fortieth Psalm as a prophecy of Christ, more especially of his atoning sacrifice and death. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: (or, according to the text of the Septuagint and the

New Testament, Heb. x. 5. a body thou hast prepared for me,) burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the roll of the book it is written concerning me. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest." To this the Apostle adds, "Above when he said, sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law. Then said He, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."*

In this Psalm, "A great Person," says Michaelis, "who describes himself as the only offering acceptable to God, and to whom Moses alluded in all his laws about sacrifices, in his sufferings prays to God, expects help from him, and promises to glorify his name. Thus the person who speaks is not David, but One greater than he, even Christ, the great Sacrifice for

* Heb. x. 5—13.

the human race."—"From this memorable passage," says Macknight, "we learn, that the only expiation for sin, which God ever appointed, is the sacrifice of his Son in the human nature; that all the sacrifices, which he appointed to the Israelites, were nothing but emblems of the sacrifice of Christ; and that, the sacrifice of Christ being offered, the emblems of it are now fitly laid aside; that under the gospel dispensation, there might remain to mankind no sacrifice, having pretension to take away sin, but the sacrifice of Christ, expressly established by God himself, as the meritorious cause of our pardon." This passage explicitly asserts,

I. The inefficacy of the legal sacrifices to take away sin. It was not possible, indeed, that they should: for they possessed no intrinsic value. They could not give an adequate representation of the evil of sin, and of the holiness of God: and consequently they could not satisfy divine justice, nor be accepted as a satisfaction. They were never instituted for that end; but were designed to be emblems of the only real sacrifice for sin, the propitiation for the sins of the world. In the sacrifices of the inferior animals God had declared that he had no pleasure, (Psalm l. Is. i. 10—15.) and by doing so, he showed under that dispensation during which they were offered that they neither were, nor could be, efficacious as an expiation of sin.

II. We are here taught the provision which God has made to supply the insufficiency of the sacrifices of the law. The Son of God is represented as addressing his Father at his incarnation, and expressing his readiness to come into the world in obedience to his will, and his pleasure in advancing to the performance of that will by the sacrifice of himself. That was the counsel of his will, which he had purposed from eternity to the praise of the glory of his grace, in regard to the salvation of a great multitude which no man can number. He gave intimations, as we have seen, from the beginning, of the existence of this gracious purpose; and instituted sacrifices to give a typical representation of his work of redeeming mercy. But man, ever prone to rest in external observances, began to imagine that these typical sacrifices, instituted as they were by God, had inherent efficacy to expiate sin. The Jews were, therefore, from time to time, guarded by the prophets against this dangerous and unfounded opinion; and instructed to believe that sacrifices had neither been instituted, nor accepted with this view. In the fulness of time, the Son of God came to do the will of the Father in laying down his life to effect that atonement for sin which the sacrifices of the law only typified. "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have

everlasting life.—The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The gracious will of God, then, is the source of human redemption. In this has originated the plan for its accomplishment. Infinite wisdom and love provided the means by which it might be attained in consistency with the honour and glory of God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.—In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."*

That Christ might be capable of offering himself to God a sacrifice for sin, it was necessary that a true and complete human nature should be fitted for him. Agreeably, therefore, to the interpretation which the Apostle Paul gives of the Psalm in his quotation from it, the Saviour is represented as saying when coming into the world, "A body hast thou prepared for me." We are further instructed,

III. That the Saviour voluntarily undertook and

* John iii. 16; Eph. i. 3—8.

accomplished the work of human redemption. Though he well knew all the evils which he should have to endure in bearing the sins of mankind, he willingly entered on the arduous task, from love to his Father, and compassion to the world. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart." This voluntary obedience which the Saviour continued to render to God till he had finished his work was pleasing and acceptable to his Father. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father," John x. 17, 18.

IV. We learn from this passage that it was revealed to the Jewish church that the sacrifice of the Messiah, with which God is well pleased, was to come in room of the legal sacrifices, in which he had no delight. This is the exposition which the Apostle Paul gives of the passage under our consideration. "Above when he said, sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein: (which are offered by the law;) then said He, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. This, argues the Apostle, was a clear intimation that the legal sacrifices in which God had no pleasure,

though at first established by divine authority, would in due time be abolished: and that the sacrifice of Christ in which the will of God is accomplished, and with which he is well pleased, remains as the only, and the infinitely efficacious atonement for sin.

In confirmation of this great doctrine, the Apostle contrasts the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ with the priesthood and sacrifice of the law. The priests under the law ministered daily: they performed their ministry in a standing posture; and it consisted in offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which were incapable of expiating sin, or of giving peace to the conscience. Christ, on the contrary, offered but one sacrifice, and that only once: they offered the blood of inferior animals as an atonement for sin; but he offered up himself: even the high priest *stood* in the holy place in the attitude of the profoundest reverence: but he after he had offered one sacrifice for sins sat down on the right hand of God. The high priest, though admitted within the vail on the day of annual atonement, was permitted to remain but a short time: so well pleasing to God, on the other hand, is the sacrifice of Christ, that when it was once offered he sat down for ever on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We now proceed to consider the testimony furnished by the hundred and tenth Psalm to the reality of the atonement made by the sufferings and the death of Christ. The life of David, indeed, forms a remarkable

era in the history of the progressive discovery of the plan of redeeming mercy. The light which had shone during the patriarchal, and the preceding part of the Mosaic dispensation, with the dimness of the dawn, now assumed the bright and beautiful clearness of the morning. The Spirit of inspiration drew aside, as it were, the vail from off the Divine Person who, from the beginning, had been the subject of promise and of prophecy;—pointed out with increasing precision the nature of the mediatorial office which he was to undertake;—and presented him as the Surety, the Substitute, and the Saviour of his people. He described the outlines of his life and reign, the extent and peculiarity of his sufferings, and the expiatory nature of his death: he foretold his resurrection by declaring that the Holy One should not be left in the grave, nor allowed to see corruption;—that he would afterwards ascend up on high, lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men, even for the rebellious; that he would send down the influences of his Spirit like rain on the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth;—that his empire would extend its boundaries till it included every people, and kindred and tongue; and that it would continue to bless mankind as long as the sun and moon endure.

While many of the Psalms primarily apply to historical events in the life of David, of Solomon, or of the Jewish Church, and in their ultimate and compre-

hensive signification are fulfilled in Christ, that now before us refers exclusively to the Redeemer. He is held forth to us in his divine nature and character, in his humiliation and sufferings, in his ascension to the right hand of the Father, in his universal dominion and sovereignty, and in the successful exercise of all the mediatorial offices.

But it is to the view which this Psalm gives us of the Redeemer in his humiliation and sufferings that we are here called to attend. The last verse is to be understood as describing in figurative language, the death of Christ, and its glorious results. "He shall drink of the brook in the way." I am aware that this has been understood by some as referring to the comforting and supporting influences of the Spirit which were afforded to the Redeemer in the progress of his undertaking: but it appears to me, from a comparison of similar portions of scripture, as well as from our knowledge of the fact, that it was in the way of humiliation that he rose to dominion and glory, that we are warranted in applying it to his sufferings. Our Lord repeatedly spoke of his sufferings under the figure of drinking: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? —He prayed saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." As the Saviour of men, it was required of him to drink deep of the waters of affliction. He had voluntarily

presented himself in the room of man, had engaged to bear the penalty of his transgression, to satisfy divine justice, to magnify the law, and to make it honourable; and it became him, therefore, when he had actually taken upon himself the form of a servant, and the nature of man, to humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

It is worthy of remark, that there is scarcely a passage in the Psalms, or in the prophecies in general, in which the Messiah is presented to our view as a sufferer, in which he is not described at the same time as a Prince and a Saviour. The twenty-second Psalm, which is so entirely appropriated to his sufferiugs, concludes with a glowing description of the glory of his reign. The Psalm now under consideration, while it alludes to the sufferings of Christ, under the figurative expressions of his drinking of the brook in the way, foretells his ascension to the right hand of the Father, the rapidity and extent of his conquests, and the universality and perpetuity of his kingdom. Had the Jews fixed their attention on this twofold character of the promised Messiah, they would not have rejected, on account of the lowliness of his condition, the Lord of glory.

When we consider the frequency and clearness with which the sufferings of Christ were made known, furnishing an exposition of the typical intent of the sacrifices "which were offered day by day and year by

year continually," we must be satisfied that the way of salvation was revealed with greater fulness, and that the knowledge of it was possessed to a much greater extent than is generally supposed. In this Psalm, the Saviour is presented to our view as an immortal Priest, and as a mighty Conqueror. In the former character he offered that sacrifice by which he reconciled us to God; in the latter, he subdued, and continues to subdue, all his and our enemies. "Jehovah saith to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah out of Zion shall send the sceptre of thy strength: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power: in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

SECT. II.

The Propitiatory Nature of Christ's Sufferings proved from the Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah.

That this chapter contains a prophetic description of the life, propitiatory sufferings, and death, of the Messiah, is too obvious to be denied by any one who really submits to the authority of divine revelation. Indeed, so evident and undeniable is the application to Christ, that Dr. Priestley himself, whilst he is

laboriously employed in withdrawing from the support of Christianity most of the prophecies of the Old Testament, yet pronounces it impossible to explain this of any other but Jesus Christ. "Even the earliest Jewish exposition that we have, makes the application to the Messiah; and the reason that subsequent Jewish writers have taken an opposite course, is plainly their resolution not to admit the claims of Jesus. The New Testament, in various places, quotes or alludes to the passage as testifying of the Messiah; and Christian writers, from the early fathers downwards, have received this interpretation as manifest and even self-evident; till recent times have exhibited men under the guise of Christian teachers, who scruple not to regard themselves as better interpreters of the Scriptures than were Jesus and his apostles."

"Behold, my servant shall be successful: he shall be exalted, and be very high, so that many shall gaze astonished at him. His appearance is disfigured more than that of any man, and his form more than that of any of the children of men: yet shall he consecrate many nations; kings shall keep silence before him; for what had not been related to them shall they see, and what they had not heard, they shall understand.

"But who believeth our declaration? Who acknowledgeth the mighty arm of Jehovah when it is revealed? For he shall spring up as a tender shoot before them, (*i. e.* the Jewish people,) and as a root out of dry

ground: he has no form nor beauty, that we should gaze at him; no appearance that we should be delighted with him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and like one who hideth his face from us (to bury his griefs in seclusion,) he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement by which our reconciliation is effected is upon him, and by his stripes we have healing. All we like sheep have gone astray, each to his own way have we turned, and Jehovah causeth to fall upon him the iniquity of us all. It is exacted and he is made answerable: and he openeth not his mouth, (he entirely acquiesces in being held responsible,) he is led forth as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he openeth not his mouth. By the oppression and judicial sentence he was taken away; but who of his generation attendeth to it: for he is cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And his grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man is his tomb; because he hath done no wrong, and no guile is in his mouth.

"But Jehovah is pleased to crush him with sufferings.

"If he will offer himself a sacrifice for sin, he shall

see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see (the fruit) of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.

"Therefore I will give him his portion with princes, and with mighty men he shall share the spoil; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

"This distinguished portion of evangelical prophecy needs no laboured elucidation. If the scriptures are of any use to mankind, if they convey any definite sentiments, if we can at all rely on the meaning of the words, if the strength and variety of phrase here employed by the wisdom of inspiration, can avail to inform and impress our minds; we must believe that the Messiah would devote himself as a voluntary sacrifice, a real and effectual expiation, suffering the heaviest woes, and all the bitterness of death, in concurrence with the gracious intentions of Jehovah, and for the salvation of rebellious men. In this view of the passage, which seems an inevitable result of impartial attention to it, the idea is manifestly included, that those sacrificial rites, to which perpetual allusion is made, were representative of this great propitiation, and intended to be a symbolical prediction of it."*

* Smith on the Sacrifice, &c. of Christ, p. 32.

In order to make the truth of these remarks still more manifest, we shall now proceed to offer a brief comment on this most precious and interesting portion of the inspired record. Our attention is directed,

I. To the terms in which the prophet introduces the Messiah to our notice; Is. lii. 13—15. He is characterised in an eminent sense as the servant of God—an expression applied to him in the forty-second chapter, where the Father presents him to our view as his chosen, in whom he supremely delighteth, and who was appointed, by the Spirit put upon him, to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. All created beings, as they have been formed by God, and are dependent upon him, are his servants; but Christ, who is in nature and in perfection equal with God, could not but by his own voluntary act become subject to the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of all. He was essentially and infinitely removed from a state of servitude, but in accepting of the mediatorial office, he undertook at the same time to place himself in the room of man; and it was in pursuance of this gracious engagement, that he emptied himself of his glory, and took upon him the form of a servant.

In this character he was subject to his Father; he came to do his will, and finish his work; he acted by his authority, and according to the plan which he had prescribed to him. He was the servant of the Father, inasmuch as he became man, and thus was made one

with those who are bound to obedience by the law of their being: he placed himself in those circumstances which were necessary to the accomplishment of the work of human redemption. The Father intrusted to him the manifestation and advancement of his glory—the reconciliation of his justice with the exercise of mercy—the bringing together in one all things in himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven—and sovereign dominion over the whole universe. In divinely instituted types, in representative sacrifices, and on his assumption of human nature, and his entrance into the world, the Father called upon angels and men to behold him—to regard him in his mediatorial office as his servant, to whom all power and authority are committed—to give him, notwithstanding his deep humiliation, the honour and glory to which he was originally and essentially entitled—and to consider him, even when his appearance is disfigured more than that of any man, as his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased. The peculiar nature of the services to which he was appointed, give a peculiarity to his character as the servant of the Father. His was a work which no mere creature could perform—different from that of angels, and of prophets, and of apostles; and his qualifications to perform what he voluntarily undertook, constituted him in a sense altogether peculiar to himself, the Servant of the Father.

It is declared of him, that he would deal prudently;

that is, that he would act in the discharge of his mediatorial office with consummate wisdom, and that, consequently, his undertaking would be crowned with success. He would also be exalted, and extolled, and be very high. From the deepest humiliation, he would be raised to honour and glory at the right hand of God, far above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, whether in this world, or in that which is to come. His kingdom would continue to prevail till it should extend over the whole earth, and embrace all the families of mankind. He would be exalted in the hearts and affections of the many thousands who should become his willing subjects; he would be extolled by their praise and their obedience; men would be blessed in him, all nations would call him blessed.

But previously to this high exaltation he would be deeply abased, and the prophet speaks of the surprise and astonishment with which both should be regarded by mankind. Many gazed with amazement at Christ upon the cross, despised and rejected of men, an outcast of the people; while they contrasted his forlorn, and apparently helpless condition, with the mighty power which he had exercised, the claims which he had asserted, and the acclamations and hosannahs of the multitude who reverenced him as the great Prophet that should come into the world. "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and say-

ing, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."

There are two ways in which the dispensations of God awaken the surprise of his intelligent creatures. First, when events fall out contrary to their expectations or belief, and when they are forced to view as realities, what they had conceived, or what they had wished, to be imaginary. In this way the nobleman of Samaria, who considered the deliverance which the prophet had foretold, as unlikely, as if the Lord would open windows in heaven, would be astonished when he witnessed the fulfilment of the prediction. The builders by whom the stone which became the head of the corner, was refused, must have felt amazed and confounded at the resurrection of him whom they had crucified. The progress of his religion, and the triumphs of his cross, made multitudes to wonder, even while they despised and perished. But, secondly, feelings of surprise may consist of grateful and joyous admiration of the wisdom, power, and grace, of the Redeemer. His name shall be called Wonderful,

says the prophet; and the part that he has taken in the salvation of man, in assuming his nature, in coming down to our world in the form of a servant, and in humbling himself, and in becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, may well excite our surprise and astonishment. The song of praise to God and to the Lamb, will proceed from hearts filled with delightful wonder in the contemplation of the grace and condescension, the union of grandeur and gentleness, of majesty and love, manifested in the person and in the reign of the Son of God.

The prophet then alludes, in terms peculiarly emphatic and expressive, to his sufferings: His appearance or visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. The same sentiment is conveyed by striking metaphors in the second verse of the following chapter. The meaning is, that the sufferings of the Messiah were to be unparalleled; that he would be treated with singular indignity; and be ranked with the basest of the human race. The feeling with which he was to be regarded is expressed in one of the prophetic Psalms: "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him seeing he delighted in him."*

* Psalm xxii. 6—9.

In consequence of his sufferings he was to sprinkle, or consecrate many nations; referring to the use of water and blood in the ceremonial expiations and purifications of the law, by which the people were sanctified. If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; and was efficacious to the removal of ceremonial uncleanness; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? He was by the light of his word, and the power of his Spirit, to deliver mankind from the darkness and the dominion of sin; and to consecrate them to himself a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation, for to show forth the praises of him who had redeemed them to God by his blood. Among his subjects would be found kings and princes, who would keep silence before him, and hearken to the heavenly truths which the Messiah would communicate—things which they had not before heard of, and the knowledge of which could not be attained but by divine revelation. But while the gospel was thus to be successful among the Gentiles, the prophet directs our attention,

II. To the unbelief of the Jews. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed; or, who acknowledgeth the mighty arm of

Jehovah when it is revealed? We may conceive that in these terms the prophets generally expressed their sorrow and astonishment at the manner in which their nation would treat the promised Messiah. They had been divinely commissioned to foretell his coming and his glory—to describe his character,—to declare the mighty works which should attest his advent,—to speak of the blessings of his reign—and to prepare the way for his arrival; but how few were so instructed by their message as to know the Redeemer and believe in him when he appeared!

The apostles and evangelists, however, are especially to be considered as complaining of the unbelief of their countrymen, in these words, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Though it was proved that Jesus was the Messiah promised to the Fathers by the most perfect fulfilment of prophecy, and by the numerous and stupendous miracles which he wrought, few comparatively of the Jews believed on him. "When he came to his own, his own received him not." Under the influence of worldly views, and inveterate prejudices, they rejected the great Deliverer; and though he was revealed as the arm of the Lord for their salvation, they acknowledged him not. His humble appearance, his meekness and gentleness, and his destitution of earthly greatness and glory, were opposed to their fondly cherished expectations of worldly pre-eminence

and distinction; and they therefore derided his claims, and persisted as a nation in despising and rejecting him.

Hence, the prophet alludes to the circumstances which were the occasion of their unbelief. "For he shall grow up before them (*i. e.* the Jewish people) as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." These circumstances in which the Messiah was to appear were the very opposite of those in which the Jews expected him to present himself to their nation. They looked for a king and a conqueror of the house of David, who should be distinguished from other worldly kings and conquerors only by additional splendour, and pomp, and power; who should give them deliverance from the Roman yoke, and raise them to unparalleled prosperity and eminence. But Jesus of Nazareth, though of the family of David, was born in poverty, grew up in obscurity, had no worldly advantages to recommend him, had not where to lay his head, was attended by fishermen, and entered on his ministry not only without the authority of the priests, but in opposition to it. Notwithstanding therefore of the moral perfection and loveliness of his character, the gracious words of heavenly truth and wisdom

which proceeded from his lips, the beneficence of his life and actions, and the mighty power by which his mighty deeds were characterised, the Jews could perceive no form or comeliness in him, nor see any beauty in him why they should desire him as their Messiah. In him they had presented to their view a man burdened with sorrows, and familiar with sufferings; who had no earthly advantages to confer on his followers; and who appeared like one who hides his face to conceal his griefs, and to bury them in seclusion: they therefore derided his claims, despised and rejected himself, and so strongly disowned him as to prefer a murderer to him, and loudly and importunately to demand his crucifixion. He was despised, and they esteemed him not.

III. The prophet next directs our attention to the nature of his sufferings, and the ends designed by them, —the expiation of our guilt. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Those who deny the propitiatory sacrifice which Christ is here represented as offering for the sins of

men, allege in support of their view, that the words in the fourth verse, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," are expressly interpreted by St. Matthew, of the miraculous cures performed by our Saviour on the sick: and as the taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses, cannot mean the suffering those infirmities and sicknesses, but only the bearing them away, or removing them, so the bearing of our iniquities is likewise to be understood, as removing them away from us by forgiveness.

In regard to this remark it may be observed, that Christ submitted to labours, fatigues, and sorrows, from compassion to mankind, and they formed a part of his humiliation as their Surety. All the evils of life are the effects of sin; and the design of the sufferings of Christ was to redeem us from all iniquity—from sin, and from all its consequences. "The Jews familiarly connected the ideas of sin and of disease; the latter being considered by them the temporal punishment of the former: so that he, who was described, as asserting, by what he was to suffer, the penal consequences of sin, would naturally be looked to, as removing, by what he was to perform, its temporal effects: and thus the mention of the one would reasonably connect with that of the other.—While the Evangelist may be considered as marking to the Jews the fulfilment of one part of the prophecy by the healing of their bodily distempers, and in this way taking our infirmities and

bearing our sicknesses, he directs their attention to that other greater object of our Saviour's mission, on which the prophet had principally enlarged; namely, the procuring forgiveness of their sins by his sufferings. And thus, the present fulfilment of the prophecy was, at the same time, a designation of the person, and a pledge of the future fuller completion of the prediction.—The minute description of the sufferings of Christ, their cause, and their effects, which here accompanies the expressions quoted by the evangelist Matthew—fully unfolds the whole nature of the Christian atonement, by showing that Christ has suffered in our place what was due to our transgressions; and that by, and in virtue of his sufferings, our reconciliation with God has been effected."*

But in denying himself, and in enduring pain, and grief, and sorrow, he suffered as our surety and substitute: for he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The cause of his sufferings were our sins; and in the shame and in the anguish to which he submitted, we see the desert of our apostasy and guilt. In declaring that he was wounded for our transgressions, the prophet alludes to his death by crucifixion; a punishment unknown to the Jews till they were brought under the Roman yoke, and for which therefore they had no epithet in their language. The still more bitter sorrows of his soul are included

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. ii. p. 68.

in the expression bruised or crushed for our iniquities. The awful intensity of these in the garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross was indicated by the circumstances which are recorded by the Evangelists. Under the load by which he was then oppressed his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Thus, the chastisement or punishment due to us, he consented to bear, and it was laid upon him; so that divine justice was fully satisfied in the Surety, the law was magnified and made honourable; and all who believe in him enjoy peace and reconciliation with God. By his stripes they are freed from condemnation, pardoned and accepted before God, and healed of all their spiritual maladies.

To amplify this view of the nature and cause of the sufferings of Christ as an atonement for sin, the prophet in the name of all the redeemed adds, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord made to fall upon him the iniquity of us all." All sincere penitents readily join in this confession: they acknowledge that they are all as an unclean thing, that their righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and that their iniquities like the wind have taken them away. The deviations of mankind from God and from holiness, the dangers to which they are exposed, and their inability to recover themselves, are here presented to our view by a striking image. They are all wandering—each preferring his own ways to the Lord's—forsaking the fountain of living water—seek-

ing happiness by removing from its only source—all busy in the pursuit of some fancied good, but all agreed in declining to enjoy it in the way of God's appointment. This, because it is rebellion against the will of his Maker, forms man's guilt; and it is also his misery: a condition which is at once sinful and helpless, and is felt and deplored by all true christians.

But their guilt, the Lord has made to fall upon Christ the Surety of his people. He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Though the Holy One of God, he was oppressed and afflicted: he suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. By the expression, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," the prophet alludes to the great anniversary sacrifice of the Jews, which typically prefigured the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. "As the high priest confessed all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the people, and laid them on the head of the scape-goat: so did God lay all the sins, all the punishment due to them, really upon one that was fit, able, and appointed to bear it, which he suffered under to the utmost, that the justice of God required on that account. He then took a view of all our sins and iniquities. Not the least error of our minds, darkness of our understandings, perverseness of our wills, carnality of our affections, sin of our nature, or lives, escaped him. This is set out by a variety of expressions used

in this matter in the type; all the iniquities, all the transgressions, and all the sins: and so by every word whereby we express sin, in this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah;—going astray, turning aside, iniquity, transgression, sin, and the like: God made them all to meet on Christ in the punishment due to them."*

They were thus made to fall upon Christ by his own consent; he voluntarily undertaking to bear the punishment due to them; and the Father, as the Supreme Moral Governor and Judge, by a judicial act, reckoning or imputing them to his account. This was the cause of his sufferings, the true ground on which they were inflicted. By the sacrifice of himself, he made expiation for iniquity, satisfied divine justice, and established a stable foundation on which mercy could be extended to sinful men, in perfect consistency with all the claims of God's moral government. It was in this way that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; that we being dead unto sin might live unto righteousness. The awful transaction was between himself and a holy God, whose wrath on account of sin he had engaged to appease, by bearing it all upon himself; in consequence of which it is removed from all those who are by faith united to him; they are freed from condemnation, and are passed from death unto life.

When, therefore, it is affirmed, that God laid on him

* Owen on the Satisfaction of Christ.

the iniquity of us all, that he bore our sins, that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, we are to understand the expressions as signifying, not that Christ took away our sins by making known to us the way in which they may be pardoned; but that he underwent the punishment due to them, in the judgment of God, and according to the sentence of the law. It was in this sense that he was made sin for us: that he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

SECT. III.

Isa. ch. 53, ver. 7—end.

Ver. 7. The prophet continues his account of the vicarious and propitiatory sufferings of Christ; and in the seventh verse, presents the Redeemer to our view as paying to the full the debt due by us to divine justice. Our liability to punishment on account of our transgressions of the law of God, is represented as a debt which we owe to that Supreme Moral Government which we have disobeyed. The extent of this liability is of course proportionable to our obligations, and can only be duly estimated by the Judge of all. But we may form some notion of this when we consider, that sin is a violation of infinite obligations,—of an authority which even to question is daring presumption and impiety,—that it is committed in defiance of the power which has given being to all things, and to which all things are possible,—in disparagement of the

wisdom which has fixed the order of providence, and given to the universe its constitution,—in opposition to the rectitude and justice of the divine character, which form the foundation of God's government and throne, —in ingratitude for existence, and the numberless blessings with which it is accompanied,—in dishonour of His awful presence who fills heaven and earth, and before whom all things are naked and open,—and in rebellion against his supremacy as the Eternal King and the Righteous Ruler. Viewed in regard to the sinner himself, sin is a perversion of his intellectual and moral powers from the great and holy purposes for which they have been given, to uses which are alike pernicious and base: it is an abuse of time and talents over which he has no independent right, and for the improvement of which he is to render an account: it is a degrading of himself from his proper rank in the scale of being, from the elevated and honourable position assigned to him among the works of God: it is a wilful separation of himself in heart, pursuits, and enjoyments, from the God who made him, a relinquishment of his portion in him, and of all the happiness which his favour can communicate.

Who, then, but the Omniscient God, can estimate the extent of guilt contracted by our rebellious and apostate race? In proportion to the infinitude of their guilt did they deserve punishment, and were they liable to its infliction. This liability the Surety of sinners

took upon himself, and graciously interposed by the sacrifice of himself between us and wrath. "It is exacted," says the prophet, "and he is made answerable; and he openeth not his mouth." The punishment due to our sins was required of him, and he entirely acquiesced in being held responsible. His willingness to bear this, is forcibly denoted by his silence. It is elsewhere expressed in the strongest terms: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."*

The silence of our Lord before the tribunal of man was remarkable. In place of pleading his own cause, or vindicating himself from false accusations, he held his peace; and it was not till the high priest adjured him by the living God that he should tell him whether he were the Christ, the Son of God, that he asserted his claims, and avowed his divine character and mission. Under all the indignities which he suffered, and the deep distresses which he endured, he showed the most perfect meekness, patience, and gentleness; and when doomed to the ignominious death of the cross, he allowed himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. These figurative expressions,

* Psalm xl. 6—8.

while they denote his perfect innocence and gentleness, forcibly characterise the violence and oppression by which he was cut off. By the oppression and judicial sentence he was taken away.

"Who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of my people was he stricken." Some have understood the expression, who shall declare his generation, as referring to his eternal Sonship; others, to his miraculous conception; and others, to his manner of life. His disciples forsook him and fled; and none appeared to bear testimony to the purity of his character, and the usefulness of his life. There are others who allege, that as the word rendered generation, commonly means the time during which an individual or a number of cotemporaries live, the expressions may signify, how long his age shall last? "Though he died for sins, yet after his resurrection he shall live for ever." But I understand the word as referring to the wickedness of the people by whom the Saviour was despised and rejected; and I am confirmed in this view by the words which follow; "for he was cut off out of the land of the living." Yet the prophet immediately assigns the reason why the providence of God allowed him to be taken away in this violent manner; "for the transgressions of my people was he stricken." It was because their guilt was reckoned to his account, that he was thus appointed to unparalleled sufferings.

Ver. 9. "And he made his grave with the wicked; or his grave was appointed with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death." As he was crucified with malefactors, it was no doubt intended that he should have been buried with them: but Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. In this way was this remarkable prophecy fulfilled. The last part of the verse, "because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth," would seem to be a reason why Providence interfered in ordering his tomb with the rich man, contrary to the intention of his enemies. But I understand it as connected with what follows in the tenth verse; "Although he had done no wickedness, neither was any deceit in his mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief."

He was not only holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, but he was infinitely dear to his Father, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. These words clearly teach us that the sufferings of Christ were the effect of the Father's will and appointment; that he, as the Supreme Moral Governor, directly imputed to him the guilt of his people, and that his most intense sufferings were inflicted immediately by God.

He dealt with him as his Son indeed, but as his Son in the character of the Friend and Surety of sinners, who undertook to pay their debt, and to render satisfaction for all their trespasses. Such was his love to his people, and so dear to him was their salvation, that the tears and agonies of his own Son prevented him not from pouring out the wrath which was due to our sins. Though his soul delighted in him, and though his delight in him, had it been possible, would have been increased by the generous kindness of Jesus, by his obedience to his Father, even to the death of the cross, by his pure devotedness to his glory, and his trust in his promises, yet he spared him not, but laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He contemplated with satisfaction the effects which were to result from the death of his Son, both in regard to the divine glory, and the salvation of sinful men; it was, therefore, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. His soul was made an offering for sin; his blood was shed as that of the sacrifices used to be; and he experienced in himself the wrath of God due to our offences. As the consequence, and as the reward of his atoning sufferings, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

The expression, "bear their iniquities," signifies, that he carried them as a burden, and not merely that he took them away; "for in every other instance where the word is to be met with, it must be understood in the former, and not in the latter acceptation; and one substantive which is derived from it, is the usual term for a burden; the Saviour is asserted by the Apostle Peter, to have 'borne our sins in his own body, when he died upon the tree,' as upon a high altar. But how he could have done this if he had not suffered as our substitute, and if our guilt had not been laid on him, or how he could have even carried away the sins of men, according to the Socinian version, when he died upon the cross, if he suffered only as a martyr to confirm his doctrine, or how he could have done it, according to the Arian hypothesis, by obtaining merely the power of forgiving our transgressions upon our repentance and reformation, it is impossible to perceive."* Even though the thing spoken of were eventually to be carried away, yet this necessarily requires that it should be carried or borne as a burden.

The prophet concludes the chapter by reiterating the statement he had made regarding the substitution and sacrifice of the Messiah. "Therefore, saith Jehovah, will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because

* Dr. Brown's Sermon before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.

he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." That the expressions in this verse, and in the preceding, "he shall bear their iniquities," "he bare the sin of many," signify his carrying them as a burden, by enduring the sufferings due to us on account of them, it requires no etymological research to prove; since the prophet himself decides it by the explanations which he gives of the acceptation in which he uses the words in question. He tells us that he was wounded for our transgressions; bruised for our iniquities, that our peace was effected by the chastisement inflicted upon him; and that by his stripes we are healed:— That he *poured* out his soul unto death, as the blood of the sacrifices was poured out to make atonement for sin; that when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief, he made his soul an offering for sin.

It is in vain, then, that the adversaries of the doctrine of atonement assail this inspired exposition of the Great Propitiatory Sacrifice which has procured eternal redemption for us. Their usual method of procedure, "to single out one expression from this entire passage, and by undermining its signification, to shake the whole context into ruins," cannot possibly avail them, because the Spirit of inspiration, as if anticipating this mode of attack, has so varied the expressions

as to render the ingenuity of man incapable of giving any other fair interpretation than this: that the Messiah, the servant of Jehovah, who was himself free from sin, was to have the burden of our transgressions laid upon him, and was by a propitiatory offering up of himself to bear the punishment due to our offences, and thus to procure our redemption.

While it is admitted by all that the expression, "to bear sin," means in the case where a man's own sin is spoken of, bearing the punishment or consequences of sin, the enemies of the doctrine of atonement deny that it admits that signification, where the sin of another is concerned. We need only quote two or three passages of Scripture to show that their objection is futile and unfounded, Lament. v. 7. "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities:" or, as translated by Dr. Blayney, "Our fathers have sinned, but they are no more, and we have undergone the punishment of their iniquities." Ezek. xviii. 19, 20. "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kep tall my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." To bear the sins of others, then, signifies the suffering of the punishment due to those sins.

"The two words which are used by the prophet to express bearing sin, are סבל in the 11th verse, and נשא

in the 12th. The latter word, it is true, is often applied in the signification of bearing away; but being (like the word bear in English, which has no less than thirty-eight different acceptations in Johnson's Dictionary,) capable of various meanings, according to the nature of the subject with which it is connected; so we find it when joined to the word sin, constantly used throughout scripture, either in the sense of forgiving it on the one hand; or of sustaining, either directly or in figure, the penal consequences of it, on the other. Of this latter sense, I find not less than thirty-seven instances, exclusive of this chapter of Isaiah; in all of which, bearing the burden of sins, so as to be rendered liable to suffer on account of them, seems clearly and unequivocally expressed.—What then is the result of this inquiry? That the word נשא, when connected with the word sins, or iniquities, is throughout the entire of the Bible to be understood in one of these two significations; Bearing, that is, sustaining on the one hand; and forgiving on the other: and that in neither of these applications, does there seem any reason for interpreting it in the sense of bearing away; nor has any one unequivocal instance of its use, in that sense, ever been adduced.

"The meaning of סבל is, if possible, yet more evident. Being used in every passage where it is not connected with the word sins, or sorrows, in the literal sense of bearing a burden, we can have but little diffi-

culty to discover its signification, where it is so connected. Its relation to sins is exemplified but in two passages, one of which occurs in the 11th verse of the chapter of Isaiah under consideration, and the other is to be found in Lament. v. 7; a passage already quoted. Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities."*

The expressions used by the Apostle Peter, when alluding to this chapter, entirely establish the truth of these remarks: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Pet. ii. 24. The obvious meaning of this language is, that Christ was really substituted in our room; that his whole human nature suffered as the atoning sacrifice for our sins; that the fearful load, which no created power could have borne, was sustained by his person on the cross. Ὃς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον. The apostle here quotes the very words of the prophet as given in the Septuagint translation, and applies them to Christ's last sufferings. The verb ἀναφέρω, strictly signifies to carry, to bear aloft: and joined with the word sins, as it is here, it corresponds to the Hebrew נשא, or כבל, in the sense of bearing their punishment, or, sustaining the burden of suffering which they impose. See Numb. xiv. 33; Heb. ix. 28.

The doctrine of atonement by the sacrifice of Christ,

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 436; and pp. 451 and 452.

so clearly taught in this chapter by the prophet, and to which the Apostle, quoting the language of the prophet, bears testimony, is indeed the leading theme of Divine Revelation. Hence the frequency with which it is presented to our view in the inspired volume, when it teaches us, in language similar to that of the prophet Isaiah, though adapted to the gospel dispensation, that the Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many: that he gave himself a ransom for all: that he was offered to bear the sins of many: that God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: that he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust: that he died for the ungodly: that he gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity; that he was delivered for our offences: that he died for our sins: that he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God: that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son: that he was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood.*

* The passages of Scripture are here referred to in the order in which they occur in the text. Math. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 28; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. v. 6; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Rom. iv. 25; Eph. v. 2; Rom. v. 10; Rev. v. 9.

SECT. IV.

On Dan. ix. 24—27; Zech. xiii. 7.

Daniel ix. 24—27. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

It does not form a part of our present duty to point out the many interesting truths which present themselves, on the attentive reading of this extraordinary passage. We are to confine our attention to the nature of the work which the Messiah is said to perform.

In the first place, the Messiah was to finish transgression. This expression is used to denote either the guilt, or the power of sin, or both. Here it refers to the former, and to its expiation by the atoning suffer-

ings and death of the Redeemer. Accordingly, the prophet declares that Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. "The Hebrew verb here translated 'cut off,' is by the Jewish rabbins interpreted, of a death inflicted by the sentence of a judge, which sense they confirm by the use of it in a parallel place, Lev. xvii. 14. to which we may add, 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. In correspondence with this prophecy, our Lord could not survive a whole year after the sixty-nine weeks were expired; nor did he. But since he was to be *cut off* at the passover, himself being the true Paschal Lamb, he died in the following year, in the month *Nisan*, answering to our April, the very same day and hour that the paschal lamb was wont to be killed."*

He finished transgression by being *cut off* for sins;—by suffering for sins, the just for the unjust—by submitting in our room to the punishment which the law of God required should be inflicted on the transgressor. He finished transgression, by making an ample and accepted atonement to God for it;—an atonement so complete, that divine justice can desire no more;—and of such boundless and perpetual efficacy, that all who rest their hopes upon it are for ever freed from condemnation.

In the second place, the Messiah was to make an end of sin. Where the English text reads, "to make

* Lowth on Daniel. See Chronological Tables published by the directions of Bishop Lloyd, Nos. 3 and 4.

an end of sin," the margin translates it, "to seal up sin," following a various reading in the Hebrew; but the sense comes all to one, for the verb which signifies "to seal up," denotes likewise the accomplishing of any thing, and is applied to sin, or the punishment of it, Lament. iv. 22. Hence the expression, "to seal up the vision and prophecy."*

He was to make an end of sin, by bringing the sacrifices for sin under the Mosaic dispensation to a close. The same idea is conveyed in the twenty-seventh verse, where it is said, "And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." His finishing of transgression superseded the use and the necessity of all the sacrifices and offerings of the law, because he really fulfilled all that they were intended to prefigure. On this ground, the Saviour clearly and frequently intimated, during his personal ministry, the entire abolition of the Levitical ritual. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." He declared that the temple, where alone sacrifices could be offered according to the law, would be destroyed, that not one stone should be left on another that would not be thrown down. In accordance with these declarations, the ministry of the apostles consisted in holding forth the Redeemer to mankind as

* See Lowth on Daniel.

the sum and the end of the sacrifices of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth; and as causing, by the once offering up of himself as a most perfect atonement, the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. Having thus laid the foundation on which repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations, all typical sacrifices for sin are of course abolished, and the repetition of them is, as the apostle affirms (Heb. x. 12—19.), as improper as it is unnecessary.

In the third place, the Messiah was to make reconciliation for iniquity. The great design of the sacrifice which he offered, was to repair the breach which sin had occasioned between God and man, and to bring heaven and earth into union and friendship. Hence, we are said to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son—to be reconciled in the body of his flesh through death. Hence also, the gospel is denominated the ministry of reconciliation. It is thus in virtue of his atoning sacrifice that peace is proclaimed on earth, and good-will to the children of men; and that all the ends of the earth are commanded to look to the exalted Redeemer for salvation.

In the fourth place, the Messiah was to bring in everlasting righteousness. This he was to accomplish by his obedience unto death in room of sinners. It was impossible that the righteousness derived from the ceremonial and sacrificial observances of the law,

to which the Jews so generally trusted, could give them a title to justification before God, and eternal life. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." It was this righteousness that was counted to Abraham, and to all, who, like him, died in the faith of the promised Redeemer, —a "righteousness which was witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe." Its merit is full and undecaying, retrospectively reaching to Abel, and prospectively through all ages, to the great multitude which no man can number, to whom it will be reckoned, and who, with this robe clean and white, shall stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb. It is because this righteousness is unchanging in its perfection, that it is suited to creatures so variable and sinful as we are: and because it is everlasting, that we can look to eternity with the humble hope of enjoying its immortal blessedness. Like its divine author, "Jesus Christ," it is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We now come to advert to the testimony of the prophet Zechariah, concerning the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer.

"Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and

against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hands upon the little ones." Zech. xiii. 7.

In this passage we have a minute and sublime representation of the procedure of God in accomplishing human redemption. The terms are so explicit in reference to the character of Christ, his substitution in our room, his sufferings as our surety, from the stroke of divine justice, and the grace of God in exempting us on his account from the effects of transgression, that even without the testimony of our Lord to the fact, we could have been at no loss to give them their true application. They stand connected with luminous prophecies of gospel times, which intimate that as the effect of the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer, a fountain shall be opened for sin and for uncleanness.

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." The divine justice in the exercise and execution of its judgments, is frequently denoted by a sword. Thus, the prophet Jeremiah says, "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Askelon?" In the present case the Lord of hosts is represented as addressing the infinite justice of his nature and government, requiring it to smite the Person

marked out as its victim. There is an awful significancy in this commission, arising from the language in which it is couched, and the omnipotence and majesty of Him, from whom it issues.

It is God who commands the sword of his justice to awaken. The effect of this command was the removal of restraints from the power of Satan, and the passions of men: this was the hour of the power of darkness. Obstacles were taken out of the way, so that they design and execute what their own malignant dispositions dictated. Divine justice was at liberty to employ all suitable means and agencies for accomplishing its purposes. The command given it to awaken, was the voice of Him who never speaks but with effect, bidding all nature to be subservient to the manifestation of his justice, in dealing with the Person who had taken upon himself the punishment due to an apostate world. It was awakened against Christ when he came under the law, and it continued to inflict upon him the suffering due to us, till he said it is finished. From his relationship to us, as our Surety and the partaker of our nature, the justice of God required that he should bear the whole of that malediction under which we lay,—that he should be striken, smitten of God, and afflicted;—that he should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, that the chastisement of our peace should be laid upon him, so that by his stripes we might be healed.

We have thus considered some of the passages of the Old Testament which bear testimony to the reality of the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The force of this testimony would have been greatly increased, if we had merely quoted the numerous passages in which the promised Redeemer was described as a Saviour from sin and its consequences. This he could only become by giving himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God: by giving himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. There is not a more comprehensive description of his character as a Saviour in the New Testament than that which is given by the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*—Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: He shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

* Isa. lxi. 1—3.

He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.*—Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall carry the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."†

Thus, did God from the beginning bear testimony concerning his Son as the only Saviour of sinful men: and of that atoning sacrifice to be offered by his sufferings and death by which he was to become the author of eternal redemption to all who obey him. Hence the exposition which the Saviour gave to his disciples from the Old Testament Scriptures of the nature and necessity of his sufferings: "Then said he unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is

* Isa. xlii. 1—5. † Isa. xl. 10, 11.

written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* In accordance with this is the declaration of Paul before Festus and King Agrippa: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."†

Is it possible to examine with attention the statements now made, without being convinced, that the plan which God has formed for the recovery and the final happiness of the human race, is that which is exhibited with such perfect consistency in the Sacred Scriptures? How could such entire harmony pervade the several parts of the system which is there presented, composed as they have been in different, and in distant ages, and under dissimilar dispensations, unless they had all emanated from him who knows the end from the beginning? Does not the survey which we have now taken irresistibly lead to the conclusion, "that the dispensation of the Gospel, with the atoning sacrifice, the completion of which it exhibits, was in preparation ever since the fall of man; and that the in-

* Luke xxiv. 26, 27; 44—49. † Acts xxvi. 22, 23.

stitutions established among the Jews, were originally designed to transmit to us by many unconscious and many unwilling witnesses, the most animated images and anticipations both of the substance and of the effects of christianity;—glorious monuments, raised on the history of the world, of the manifold wisdom and grace of God, hid from ages and generations, and now made manifest to the saints."*

* Moncrieff on the Evidences of the Jewish and Christian Revelation, p. 123.

CHAP. VIII.

A RECAPITULATION OF THE EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF SACRIFICE IN THE PRIMEVAL AGE OF THE WORLD.

EVERY one who has given any attention to the subject must have remarked, that the religion which God has communicated to sinful men under the Patriarchal, the Levitical, and the Christian Dispensations, is characterised by the rite of animal sacrifice. There exists a remarkable coincidence between the facts and institutions recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, and the facts and doctrines developed in the New;—a coincidence which is unaccountable except on the supposition that the Christian Dispensation has been designed by its Divine Founder to affix the proper signification to the typical institutions of the two preceding dispensations.

The design of the great sacrifice which was offered to God under this last dispensation, was, as we are fully assured, to make atonement for sin. This having been so clearly the purpose of the sacrifice which has been offered under the Christian Economy, do we not derive from this development of the institution, the principle by which we may unfold the intent and

signification of this rite as practised under the Levitical and patriarchal dispensations.

With regard to the Levitical or Mosaic Dispensation, we have seen that the design of sacrifice, as under the Christian, was piacular—to make atonement for sin. This connexion of these two dispensations, was, as was fully shown, intentional,—sacrifice under the former having been instituted as a typical representation of the one infinitely efficacious sacrifice under the latter. But "as the real piacular sacrifice of Christ under the gospel, and as the shadowy piacular sacrifices of animal victims under the law, were alike ordained of God: so, if the animal sacrifices under Patriarchism were shadowy piacular of the same nature as those under the law; they must of necessity have been also ordained of God, and could not have been an unauthorized ordinance of mere human invention. We may safely pronounce, that no intentional connexion could possibly have existed between animal sacrifice under Patriarchism and animal sacrifice under Christianity, unless God himself had alike instituted each sacrifice; because an intentional connexion involves, of plain necessity, a prophetic reference."*

In the discussion of this subject we alluded to the different theories which have been entertained in regard to the character of the sacrifice offered under the patriarchal dispensation. It has been viewed in the

* Faber's Inquiry into the Origin of Sacrifice, p. 17.

light, I. Of Eucharistic sacrifice, or the outward sign of thanksgiving: II. Of Homologetic sacrifice, or the outward sign of confession: III. Of simple deprecatory sacrifice, or the purchase of pardon by gifts: IV. Of expiatory sacrifice, or the purchase of pardon through the medium of vicarious and atoning suffering.

We have shown that expiatory sacrifice was practised from the beginning with the divine sanction and approbation; that the doctrine of atonement, during the patriarchal age, prevailed universally throughout the world; and that its general prevalence among the heathen proves its common and its divine origin. It was noticed that the sacrifice of Job's three friends was commanded by God; and that as it was a sacrifice for sin, and could not possibly, from the nature of the divine character, be intended as a gift wherewith to purchase pardon, it must necessarily have been an atonement for sin. Nor is this position invalidated by the circumstance that the intercessory prayer of Job is mentioned in conjunction with the burnt-offering of his friends. The conclusion to be deduced from this circumstance is, not that the sacrifice possessed no expiatory efficacy because it was accompanied with intercession, as God had commanded, but that the intercession would have been unavailing, if the prescribed atoning sacrifice had not been offered.

We also noticed the grounds on which we believe that the burnt-offering of Noah was an expiatory sacri-

fice. In proof of this, we traced to Noah, as the common origin, the doctrine of atonement universally prevalent throughout the heathen world. As it is clear that the burnt-offering presented by this patriarch was a sacrifice for sin; and as it could not, in consistency with the moral attributes of God, have been what is termed a simple deprecatory sacrifice, offered up as a bribe to the Almighty; it must therefore have been an atonement.

We found in the circumstances narrated regarding the offerings of Cain and Abel abundant evidence to prove the primeval divine institution of piacular sacrifice; and that by means of this typical rite Christ was set forth as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The words which God addressed to Cain are, we think, rightly understood as enjoining him to offer a piacular sacrifice. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And, if thou doest not well, a sin-offering coucheth at the door."* If this interpretation be admitted, the divine institution of atoning sacrifice at the commencement of the Patriarchal Dispensation is clearly and incontrovertibly established.

In order to escape from this conclusion Mr. Davison has attempted to show, that the Hebrew word חטאת, may be rendered a punishment for sin, as well as a sacrifice for sin. That the word in question primarily signifies sin, is admitted by all. That it does very

* Gen. iv. 7.

often secondarily denote a sin-offering, is equally certain: and that this is its precise meaning in the language of God addressed to Cain, appears to me very evident. But for the purpose of neutralising this language, "and of thus nullifying the argument derived from it, Mr. Davison contends, that the word referred to may be rendered a punishment for sin just as properly as an offering for sin. Now this assertion," says Mr. Faber, "I take upon myself to controvert. I deny that the word *Chattoth* ever denotes punishment for sin: Mr. Davison maintains the contrary. With him, therefore, rests the burden of demonstration. Let him prove his point by the adduction of *any one* definite text from the whole Hebrew Scriptures: and I will acknowledge, that he has neutralised the passage in which God addresses Cain. As yet his point remains unproved."*

As the Hebrew word alluded to is used only in two acceptations, namely, to denote sin, and an offering for sin, the question is, in which of these senses is it to be understood in the language of God to Cain. That it should be rendered sin-offering, and not sin, as in our common translation of the Scriptures, appears to me to be very obvious for the following reasons.

I. If the word be rendered sin, the passage is tautological and without meaning: "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door:" that is, If thou art a sin-

* Faber's Inquiry, &c. p. 104.

ner, thou assuredly art a sinner. On the other hand, if the expression be understood to signify sin-offering, the meaning of the passage is clear and instructive.

II. This meaning is in entire accordance with the context. That, when viewed in connexion with the statement of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, clearly shows, as was formerly noticed, that Cain was actuated by a proud, self-righteous spirit, which had led him haughtily to disregard the offering to God a sacrifice as an atonement for his sin. He claimed acceptance with God on the ground of his own obedience or well-doing. Hence, his offering was rejected; while "the Lord had respect unto Abel and unto his offering. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well (that is, if thy obedience on which thou reliest, shall stand the test,) shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well (and surely thou art now conscious of guilt,) a sin-offering coucheth at the door."

III. This interpretation is agreeable to the phraseology of the passage. The participle rendered *lieth*, is descriptive of the couching of an animal: "and this participle is irregularly written in the masculine gender, because, agreeably to the more common sacrificial practice, the animal pointed out to Cain was a male."

According to this view of the passage the language which God addressed to Cain contained a command to offer piacular sacrifice.

It was in obedience to the command of God, as was shown when we adverted to the testimony of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Abel offered animal sacrifice to God. By faith in a divine revelation he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Consequently expiatory sacrifice was the subject of that divine revelation. It therefore follows, that expiatory sacrifice was from the beginning instituted by God.

Finally, the language of Moses in giving the law implies the primeval divine institution of sacrifice. The Hebrew legislator does not enjoin the observance of a rite with which the Israelites were unacquainted; nor is there any intimation that it was then *divinely instituted* for the first time: it is only recognised and modified as a well-known ordinance of the worship of God. The precepts of the Levitical Code refer exclusively to "the mode and occasion of sacrifice, while the observance of the naked rite itself is never once independently and abstractedly enjoined."* The law included in its ritual a divine institution which had been previously in familiar existence, and which the fathers of the people, then introduced into covenant with God, had devoutly observed. It was only neces-

* See the first three chapters of Leviticus.

sary, therefore, in accordance with the minute particularity of the Mosaic dispensation, to fix the mode and the occasion of its future observance, and to specify the animals which were to be devoted in sacrifice. The manner in which the rite is to be practised is regulated with the greatest minuteness; but in no single instance is it said, that it was instituted under the law for the first time.

The doctrine of atonement being involved in expiatory sacrifice, the remarks which have now been made in regard to the latter, are applicable in all their force to the former. That doctrine, in the passage in which it first appears under the law, is mentioned as a doctrine already well known. "Aaron and his sons shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin-offering, for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it; and thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it."*

When we connect these remarks with the explicit and continuous testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures to the reality and efficacy of the expiatory sacrifice to be offered by the promised Messiah, we have evidence strong and conclusive, that the doctrine of Atonement is Fundamental in Divine Revelation, and that it was made known to mankind immediately after the Fall.

* Exod. xxix. 32, 33, 36.

BOOK II.

ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE.

It is in the highest degree probable that the priestly office had its origin from divine institution before the giving of the law. It existed among the earliest nations, and its duties were often discharged by heads of families to the members of their household, and also by the princes of the people. Melchisedec was at once King of Salem, and Priest of the Most High God. The office was appropriated under the Mosaic economy to a particular class of men; who were by the command of God specially separated from their brethren, and consecrated to the priesthood. (Exod. xxviii.)

The word priest (כהן ἱερεύς,) denotes a sacrificer, or one who presents sacrifice to God. The offering of oblation or atonement forms the primary branch of the office; and is so essentially connected with it that

the one can have no existence without the other. A priest and a sacrifice are correlative terms. Hence the Apostle says, that every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. In a state of innocence, therefore, this office could not have existed. It has originated in the plan of redeeming mercy, designed to procure by a Mediator satisfaction to divine justice. The revelation of this plan, and of the means by which it is to be effected, is the common source from which all ancient nations derived the institution of sacrifice;—an institution which so generally prevailed over the world, and which occupied the chief place in the religious rites of every people.

That it has been derived from this common origin appears to me evident from the considerations to which I formerly alluded. Had sacrifice not been appointed by divine command, how can we account for its universal practice as a principal part of religious worship? For there does not seem to be any natural connexion between the slaughter of an innocent creature, as an act of homage to the Deity, and the forgiveness of sins. What is there in the blood of a thousand victims to propitiate a Being of infinite intelligence and excellency, and who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things? Would not reason rather suggest that his displeasure must be incurred by depriving a harmless

animal of life? Would it not seem to us most fit that he should say to the person who attempted in this way to make atonement for his guilt, "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy fold. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."

Yet, we have seen, notwithstanding, that sacrifice, as a rite of religious worship, prevailed from the earliest times; that Abel, by faith, and consequently by divine direction, offered sacrifice unto God; that in place of being rejected, as doubtless he must have been, had the service which he presented been unauthorized, he was assured of his being accepted; that Noah built an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar; and that he also obtained marks of the approbation of God. Animals were distinguished from the beginning, as it would seem, as clean or unclean; a distinction which must have been made by the divine command; and was designed to point out what might be acceptably offered in sacrifice to God, and what, for reasons unknown to us, he had prohibited to be employed for that use.

The history of revealed religion shews us that sacrifice formed a prominent part of the worship of God from the beginning. The covenants made with Noah and Abraham, were ratified by the blood of animals which were presented as an atonement. The covenant made with Israel at Sinai was confirmed by the same means. The design of sacrifice in this instance, as well as in every other in which it was presented according to the divine appointment, was to typify the oblation of infinite value, the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. The end for which Aaron and his offspring were consecrated to the priesthood was, chiefly, that they might officiate in making typical atonements for sin, and that they should prefigure in the discharge of their office the great High Priest of good things to come.

These observations are sufficient to shew that the great duty of the office of priest is to offer sacrifice; and that wherever the latter ceases the former cannot exist. In a few years after Christ had made the only atonement for sin, the typical priesthood of the sons of Levi was abolished: and now there is no such office known in the Redeemer's kingdom. He alone is the priest,—the great high priest over the house of God, who entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The appellation priest is not once applied in the New Testament to any of the office-bearers whom he has appointed in his church.

They are styled servants, ministers, stewards, overseers, and ambassadors. Their work is not to offer sacrifice, —for that never can be attempted without gross impiety;—but to direct mankind to exercise faith in the sacrifice of infinite value, by which alone the pardon of sin may be obtained.

They are not priests in any other sense than are all true believers in Christ; who are sometimes in a metaphorical acceptation of the term thus designated. The children of Israel also, as the people of God, were addressed by this name: Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. The Apostle Peter, speaking to Christian disciples, says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." All the members of the family of the redeemed are called priests, because of the free and uninterrupted access which they enjoy unto God; and because of the interest which they have in the great High Priest, and the union they have to him. He is the partaker of our nature, and they are joined to him by one spirit. He hath loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and hath made them kings and priests unto God even his Father. They are therefore enjoined to exercise the privilege of presenting their bodies unto God, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which

is their reasonable service:—to offer unto the Lord the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and to call upon the name of the Lord.

The origin and nature of the priestly office are mentioned by the Apostle, Heb. v. 1—8. The properties which he describes as characteristic of this office are, 1st. That every high priest,* (and consequently every priest,) be taken from among men. It was necessary that he should be a partaker of human nature, —selected from among his brethren of mankind. While beings of superior orders are employed in rendering important services to those who shall become heirs of salvation; they are unqualified, from their not possessing the same nature, for acting in a mediatorial capacity between God and men. Hence the necessity, as we shall afterwards have occasion to notice, of the Son of God becoming man, in order to be constituted the High Priest of our profession.

2. His office consisted in ministering in the room, and on the behalf of men, in the things of God. He was ordained for the benefit of men, and to draw near to God for them. Had there been no sin, such a constitution of things would have been unnecessary, as no atonement would have been required, and as each one in his own person would have enjoyed the privilege, without a mediator, of approaching unto God. In

* The Apostle mentions the high priest in particular, as he was more especially a type of Christ.

consideration of the interposition of Jesus Christ, God instituted a typical priesthood in the Jewish church, to prefigure the future priesthood of him who now appears in the presence of God for us; and as the priest under the law was appointed to (τα προς τον θεον,) do all things with God which were requisite to the pardon and purification of the people, so the great High Priest of our profession, by his oblation offered unto God, and by his intercession with God, has obtained eternal redemption for all who obey him.

3. The special end of the priests' office was, to "offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." It was his peculiar duty to make the atonement by the sprinkling of the blood of the victim slain. The opinion of some is, that by gifts we are to understand free-will offerings; and that by sacrifices is intended such as were determined, as to occasions, times, and seasons, by the law. But from the expression of our Lord, (Matth. v. 23.) it would seem that all sacrifices for sin, all offerings whatever, are sometimes denoted by the term gifts. By the two words which are here used by the apostle, "gifts and sacrifices," is meant all kinds of sacrifices for sin: "and, therefore, that expression, ὑπερ ἁμαρτιων, for sins may refer to δωρα, gifts, as well as θυσιας, sacrifices."

4. It was required that the person invested with the priestly office, should be one "who can have compassion on (is able mercifully to bear with) the ignorant, or

on them that are out of the way." He was taught by personal experience to cherish this sympathetic feeling towards his erring brethren; he himself also being encompassed with infirmity. This essential qualification is possessed by our merciful and faithful High Priest in a pre-eminent degree.

5. By the constitution and law of God, a divine call to the priestly office was necessary. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." The office itself having had its origin in the mercy and wisdom of God, and having been so closely connected with the plan of human redemption, it could not, of course, be warrantably assumed, nor could its duties be discharged, without the divine direction and appointment. An office of such vast import, so sacred, so honourable, and which conferred honour on him who exercised it, could not have been lawfully undertaken except by those who were solemnly invested with it, and separated to the performance of its functions, by the command of God. (Exod. xxviii. 1.) Hence, the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, in consequence of their contemptuous disregard of the divine authority in the institution of the priesthood.* Hence, also, the punishment which was inflicted afterwards on king Uzziah, when he attempted the peculiar work of the priesthood, by offering incense unto the Lord.†

* Numb. xvi. 3; xvii. 10. † 2 Chron. xxvi. 6—22.

The Apostle applies this description of the nature qualifications, and duties, of the priesthood, to our Lord Jesus Christ; to typify whom in his priestly office, the priesthood and sacrifices of the law were instituted. "For when God came to reveal this counsel of his will, and to represent to the church what had been transacted within the veil, for their faith and edification, as also to give them some previous insight into the manner of the accomplishment of these his holy counsels; he did it by the institutions of a priesthood and sacrifices, or a sacred office, and sacred kind of worship, suited and adapted to be a resemblance of this heavenly transaction between the Father and the Son. For the priesthood and sacrifices of the law were not the original exemplar of these things, but a transcript and copy of what was done in heaven itself, in counsel, design, and covenant, as they were a type of what should afterwards be accomplished on the earth. Now, although the names of priest and sacrifice are first applied to the office mentioned under the law, and to their work, from whence they are transferred under the New Testament to Jesus Christ, that we may learn thereby what God of old instructed his church in; yet the things themselves intended and signified by these names, belong first and properly unto Jesus Christ, upon the account of this his undertaking. And the very names of priests and sacrifices were but im-

properly ascribed to them who were so called, to be obscure representations of what was past, and types of what was to come."*

* Owen's Exercitations on the Priesthood of Christ. Exod. xxviii.

CHAP. II.

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF CHRIST FOR DISCHARGING THE DUTIES OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE.

THE qualifications of Christ for the priestly office, and the nature of the duties involved in its exercise, are minutely stated in scripture; and we shall find that He most perfectly possesses the character, and discharges the functions of our high priest.

I. It was necessary that as priest he should be appointed and called of God to his office. A divine appointment was indispensably requisite to the validity of the priesthood. "No man takes this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." Christ was designated to this office in those counsels of peace which were between the Father and the Son, commonly termed the covenant of redemption. He was encouraged to undertake the mediatorial work by promises of support in its accomplishment, and of honour and glory as his reward. His priesthood, which was to be like himself immutable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, was assigned unto him by the will and command

of God; and to denote its permanency, he was consecrated to it by an oath, by him that said unto him, "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:" by so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better covenant.

In the fulness of time he was sanctified, and sent by the Father to the discharge of this office; and being immediately called to it by God, he was not anointed with oil, as were the priests of the order of Aaron, but was consecrated by that which the holy oil typified, the influences of the Holy Spirit. When he entered on his ministry, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. He was thus invested with the authority requisite to entitle him to approach unto God on behalf of mankind, and to perform in their name, and with a view to their redemption, all the duties of the priestly office. Our Lord accordingly always ascribed his authority as Messiah, to the express will and appointment of his heavenly Father.*

II. It was necessary, in order to discharge his priestly office, that Christ should take upon him the nature of man. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, (that is, of human nature,) he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through

* John v. 19, 26, 27, 43; vi. 38; vii. 28; viii. 54; x. 18.

death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Our nature, as he assumed it, was inherently and absolutely holy—holy, not merely as has been alleged, in consequence of the extraordinary indwelling of the Holy Spirit—holy, not merely because of the union of the divine nature with the human, but perfectly holy in itself, as entirely so as was that of Adam at his original creation. Accordingly, a body, that is, a complete human nature, was specially and miraculously prepared for him;*—a circumstance which proves both that the nature which Christ assumed was inherently and absolutely holy, and that it was the purpose of God that it should be so. On the supposition of the contrary, why was a miraculous interposition necessary to fit for his assuming the nature of those whom he came to deliver? But his perfect purity is represented as having been designed by this deviation from the laws of nature. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."†

The expression of the Apostle, that God sent his Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh,"‡ is evidently intended to mark the contrast between his nature and

* Heb. x. 5. † Luke i. 35. ‡ Rom. viii. 3.

ours, in regard to the most perfect purity. The likeness or image of any thing is different from the thing which it resembles. The Saviour appeared on earth in the likeness of sinful flesh, because he submitted to bear those sorrows to which we sinful men are liable: because he was numbered with transgressors, and crucified with malefactors: and because, as our Surety, he was treated as if he had been a sinner. "He was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

It was necessary that Christ should take our nature upon him. This necessity is maintained by the Apostle in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and he there assigns very fully the grounds on which this union was required in regard to the Saviour of mankind. He shows that it was necessary, 1st, On the ground that such a relationship or oneness between him and his people would be thus constituted, as would qualify him to act and to suffer as their Substitute and Surety, and give them a claim to the benefit of his atoning sufferings. In consequence of this oneness he has become their brother; and notwithstanding his being perfectly holy, while they are sinful, and the infinite distance between them in respect of his divine nature, he is not ashamed to own them as his near relatives, and to call them brethren. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the

Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, (that is, of one nature,) for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

2. The Apostle maintains that the assumption of the human nature in the person of Christ was necessary on the ground that it was by the suffering of death in the very nature as well as in the room of his people that he was to work out their redemption. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The death of Christ therefore must have had peculiar efficacy in delivering sinful men from the guilt and the consequences of transgression. It was the divinely appointed and the necessary means of securing these great ends.

3. It was required that Christ should take upon him the nature of man for the reason which the Apostle assigns, in the sixteenth verse: "He taketh not hold of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold." He did not interpose for the deliverance of those Angels who kept not their first estate; but for the redemption of the seed of Abraham, that is, of all who from every age, and every country, become through faith in the Saviour the children of Abraham: and

because they are the objects of his gracious mediation, whom he was to save by the once offering up of himself a sacrifice to God, he in infinite kindness and condescension partook of their nature.

4. It was required that Christ should assume our nature on the ground of complete qualification for all the parts of the mediatorial office. It was necessary that in all things he should be made like unto his brethren,—by the possession of all the sinless properties and affections of their nature;—and by identity of circumstances in regard to sorrows and to sufferings. He was thus constituted a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tried, he is able to succour them that are tried." He performed for them towards God, and he is ever able to perform, all that their wants require. He not only saved them from wrath by the atonement of his blood, but by his own sufferings in their nature he acquired the sympathy and fellow-feeling in the exercise of which they are assured that he must deal tenderly and truly with them in all their trials and sorrows. By his actual experience "in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death," he now possesses in his glorified humanity the capacity of sympathizing with his disciples in all their afflictions, difficulties, and dis-

tresses. "For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.—A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

Thus was the Son of God fully qualified for discharging all the parts of the priestly office on behalf of mankind by his assumption of the human nature. His incarnation, indeed, formed an era in the dispensations of God infinitely the most important that can be conceived. It was a stupendous miracle of power and wisdom, love and mercy; in comparison of the greatness and the consequences of which the former creation was not to be remembered, nor come into mind.† An union of a nature that has no parallel was formed between the Deity and humanity, between the Creator and the creature, between infinite power and limited existence, the Mighty God and dependant being. The Prince of Life, and the Lord of Glory, became the Man of Sorrows;—He who made all things was indissolubly united to his own workmanship;—the fulness

* Heb. iv. 15; Isa. xl. 11; chap. xlii. 3; Math. xi. 28.
† Isa. lxv. 17—end.

of the Deity was mysteriously and incomprehensibly joined to the nature of man. The natures which are thus brought into the closest connexion in the person of Christ are in themselves infinitely distant.

Angels with eager expectation looked forward to this extraordinary event. When it was accomplished, multitudes of the heavenly host descended towards the plains of Bethlehem, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Nor was the joy which this event inspires designed for any peculiar age or nation. It is good tidings of great joy to all people. We are as deeply interested in it as were the persons to whom it was first announced. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."*

III. It was necessary that Christ as our High Priest should have the personal experience of suffering. This requisite to the discharge of the priestly office on behalf of sinful men is repeatedly mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In this way, he acquired by personal experience, acquaintance with the difficulties and trials attendant on holy obedience to the will of God in the present state. Though as the Son of God he might have claimed exemption from the distresses

* Isa. ix. 6.

and sorrows of human life; yet, for our sake he condescended to bear them; and became intimate with that kind of obedience which consists in voluntarily submitting to bear the punishment of sin. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."†

How could the Son of God learn obedience by the things which he suffered? Not by acquiring additional knowledge of the duties which it became him to discharge as the Saviour of sinners: but by willingly resigning himself to the sorrows and sufferings which are the wages of sin; and thus, by personal experience, becoming acquainted with the actual performance of all those obligations which he had undertaken to fulfil, in the room of sinful men, to the violated law and justice of God. Thus was the author of salvation made perfect (τελειωθεὶς, completed) through sufferings. In this way he was accomplished as our high priest; and he acquired all the qualifications requisite to con-

* Phil. ii. 5. † Heb. v. 7—11.

stitute him a complete and an adequate Saviour. He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and the nature of man, that through the obedience of his sufferings he might become the author of eternal redemption to all who obey him.—In connexion with these observations it may be farther remarked,

IV. That Christ consecrated himself to the performance of the duties of his priestly office. From the time, indeed, in which he entered into the world he was invested with this office. But he did not properly and publicly engage in its exercise and discharge till he approached the close of his prophetical ministry; when he offered himself through the Eternal Spirit a sacrifice unto God. Though he was visibly and solemnly inaugurated at his Baptism, when the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and a voice from heaven was heard saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased:—it was not till he laid down his life for us that he completed the atonement for sin.

But he consecrated himself to the priestly office, and to the sacrifice which he was to offer. "For their sakes I consecrate myself."* When the time approached in which he was to make reconciliation for iniquity, he went up to Jerusalem, and acquainted his disciples

* John xvii. 19.

by the way of all the things which should befall him there.* As the victim under the law was brought to the door of the tabernacle, he, after the preparatory sacerdotal acts in the garden of Gethsemane, when he had offered up unto God prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, went forth to the sacrifice, and was led as a lamb to the slaughter. As the priest under the Old Dispensation made atonement for sin by the sprinkling of blood; so Christ presented the oblation to God by laying down his life,—by pouring out his soul unto death.—It is scarcely necessary to remark,

V. That as Christ possesses these, and all other qualifications, requisite to constitute him a merciful and faithful high priest, so he is, in the true sense of the term, really and properly a priest. He received his office immediately from God; and he discharged, and continues to discharge, truly, efficiently, and with infinite kindness, the duties belonging to it. So far was he from being a priest merely in a figurative sense, that Melchisedec was only a likeness; and that the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants was instituted to furnish to the Jewish church some representation of his office. "The propriety of language would be more consulted, were we to affirm that the Lord Jesus is the only proper priest that ever was or ever will be; and that all others, to whom that name has

* Luke xviii. 31—33; Matth. xx. 17—19.

been legitimately given, were only shadows and pictures of him."*

The reality of his priesthood is asserted by the Apostle when, after mentioning the nature and design of the priestly office, (Chap. v. 1—10.) he applies the description to Christ, and declares that he was appointed to this office by God. If Aaron was a priest in the proper sense of the term, Jesus Christ, whose priesthood is so far superior to his, must also be a priest really, and not in a metaphorical acceptation of the expression. Is it not a leading design of the Epistle to the Hebrews to wean the affections of the Jews from the Mosaic ritual, by showing that useful and excellent as was the Levitical priesthood, the sacerdotal office of Christ, the great High Priest of Christianity, is incomparably more excellent? But if he were a priest only by a metaphorical and figurative use of the expression, though he be more excellent than Aaron in other respects, he is decidedly his inferior as a priest; inasmuch as the mere semblance and shadow of any thing has no value when compared to the reality. How could such a representation of the Saviour be supposed to have exalted him in the estimation of the Hebrews, or, to have induced them to withdraw their attachment from Judaism, and bestow it on Christianity?

In what part of Scripture is it insinuated that Christ

* Smith on the Sacrifice, &c. p. 174.

is called a priest only on account of some similitude between what he does for the church and that which the Levitical priests performed? On the contrary, are not all the properties and qualifications essentially requisite to the exercise of the priestly office, attributed to Him in their most perfect degree? Was he not called to the priesthood in as extraordinary and public a manner as was Aaron? Like him, was he not constituted for men, to draw near to God for them, and to do all things on their behalf with God, which are necessary for their pardon and purification? Like him also, his principal work consisted in making reconciliation with God for the sins of the people, by offering up a propitiatory sacrifice. And like the legal high-priest, who on the day of annual atonement, passed within the veil, he, the high-priest of good things to come, entered in once into the holy place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

But though there are many points of resemblance between Christ, the true high-priest, and Aaron and his descendants, who were priests in figure and in emblem, there are of necessity many things in which they are altogether dissimilar. Mere emblems, however, wisely adapted to the end of their institution, were incapable of furnishing a full and perfect representation of Him who is God and man in one person, who reflects glory on all the offices which he has condescended to exer-

cise, and who has been constituted a priest for evermore by the immutable decree and oath of the Almighty.

It was required of the high-priest in figure, to offer for his own sins, as well as for those of the people; but he being without spot required no sacrifice for himself. The Jewish high-priest offered the blood of victims which were provided for him: but Christ made reconciliation for the sins of men with his own blood. He appeared in the presence of God, standing in the posture of the profoundest reverence: but Christ when he had by himself purged our sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of the throne on high: "He speedily quitted the sacred place, and proved by his own experience, and that of others, the want of substance and efficiency in his services, as to a moral effect; Christ abideth in the heavenly sanctuary, effectually answering all the purposes of his mediation:—he ministered on the behalf of only one small nation; Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world:—he acted in the routine of a temporary establishment; Christ is the high-priest 'after the power of an endless life:'—he was a frail and sinful, feeble and dying man; 'Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him; he is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens, made perfect through sufferings, consecrated for ever-

more:' he is the Son and Lord over his redeemed and reconciled family,—whom all the church and all the angels of God worship, and to whom he saith, 'Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever!'"*

* Smith on the Sacrifice, p. 134.

CHAP. III.

ON THE PERFECT HOLINESS OF CHRIST—THE NECESSITY OF PERFECT HOLINESS TO THE EFFICACY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD.

It was necessary that Christ, as a priest, should be perfectly holy. This was signified by the various ablutions which were practised by divine command at the consecration of Aaron and his sons. The high priest as he officiated was enjoined to wear a mitre the nature of which was prescribed to him. It was made of fine linen, and had in front a golden plate with the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." It was intended to denote, not merely the sanctity of character required in him who ministers between God and man, but to point out the purity of our great High-Priest, who is the Holy One of God, and who was as a Lamb without blemish or spot. "For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was

since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."*

It is obvious, that if his human nature had been in any respect tainted by sin, or, if he had been chargeable with a single deviation from the law of God, in thought, word, or deed, he would have required an expiation for himself, and consequently would have been incapable of making an atonement for the sins of others. On this subject of infinite importance, as connected with all our hopes, the testimony of Scripture is ample and decided. To secure the perfect purity of his human nature, as was noticed under the former head, a body was miraculously prepared for him. His purity was as immaculate, and his moral perfection as complete as Adam possessed when he came from the hands of his Almighty Maker. Not only were his understanding, will, and affections, undefiled, but they were replenished with the supernatural endowments of the Holy Spirit. Though in his human nature he was capable of increase and progression, he was at all times the holy one and the just, who did no sin, and in whose mouth guile was never found. His perfect holiness appeared in all the words and actions which he uttered and performed; so that his enemies were unable to charge him with imprudence or blameworthiness. The judge, who, contrary to his own judgment, passed sentence against him,

* Heb. vii. 26—end.

was forced to vindicate his innocence, and publicly to declare that he could find no fault in him. The disciple who betrayed him, who had attended him for years, who had witnessed him in his most secret retirement, and who had every opportunity of being thoroughly acquainted with his private conduct and views; —this man who had the disposition to inform against Jesus, and who was tempted by avarice, ambition, resentment, and even a regard to his self-preservation, to make a discovery had he been able, attests before those very rulers to whom he had sold him, the perfect purity of his Master's character, and after he had declared in their presence, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood," went in an agony of grief and remorse and destroyed himself. Here was the strongest evidence borne, not to the innocence merely, but to the personal excellencies of Christ, by an enemy, by a man who had occupied the office of treasurer in the Redeemer's household, who was with him in those daily scenes of domestic life where the real principles and dispositions are unfolded, and who would gladly have recollected, had it been possible, any thing to the disadvantage of Jesus, by which he might hope to ease his conscience of its intolerable burden.

It may be proper, in order to obtain comprehensive and affecting views of the perfect holiness of Christ, to consider the manner in which he discharged all the

duties of piety and moral obligation,—his duties in regard to God, to mankind, and to himself. For, when he voluntarily made himself under the law, he became bound to render obedience to all its requirements, and to perform not only the outward act, but to possess the inward purity and principle from which all actions derive their true character.

His piety was perfect. That he loved the Lord God with the whole heart and mind, he evinced by the readiness and the perseverance with which he engaged in the most laborious and self-denying task, in order to promote his glory. The divine character and perfections were to him the object of delight and complacency; and so constantly was he devoted to God in fervid love and gratitude, that he reckoned it his meat to do the will of Him that sent him, and to finish his work. Compare his whole conduct with the commands of the first table of the law—with the supreme love, worship, and unreserved obedience, required by the first; with the humility, reverence of God, cordial submission, and acts of devotion, demanded by the rest,—and he appears without fault. Amid the greatest trials and distresses, and in the agony of Gethsemane when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, he reiterates the prayer, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. Though the sensibilities of his holy nature must have been far more exquisite than

ours, he murmured not at the evils which he was called to endure, but cheerfully made himself of no account, and from love to the will of God, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

So uniformly fervent and exalted was the piety of Christ, that it is difficult for sinful creatures like us even to form a just conception of it. He has, in this respect, left far behind the most devout of mankind. Removed alike from enthusiasm and superstition, he walked with God, and exemplified the nature of true and perfect piety. He has shown in his character the signification and extent of the law which requires us to give to God the supremacy over our hearts and lives, and to love and serve him first, and other objects in subordination to him. In pursuing this end he voluntarily submitted to shame, and privation, and suffering; even "He pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

Nor did he fall under the standard of perfection in performing those duties which as a man he owed mankind. His obedience to the first commandment of the second table of the law, in reverencing and honouring his parents, is repeatedly noticed in Scripture. Besides his subjection to them in early life, he gave a memorable proof of filial piety on the cross, when he commended his mother to the care of the beloved

disciple, and requested his parent to regard him in future as her son.

Were we to examine his life in reference to each of the duties which men owe to one another, humanity, gratitude, friendship, patriotism, charity, truth, and veracity, we should find him perfect in the performance of them all. But we need only glance at his integrity and benevolence. With respect to the first, we observe an undeviating regard in all that he said and did to the reputation, happiness, and property of others. There is in no single instance a disposition shown to treat with indifference, far less with injustice, the rights of any human being. The same integrity which he manifested by the simplicity, boldness, and fidelity of his manner of communicating divine truth, he exemplified in the whole of his conduct towards others. He was throughout meek, firm, open, prudent, patient and forbearing, never compromising principle, compassionate to the multitude, elevated above regard to their favour or frown, humble and unostentatious to a remarkable degree, and yet when the interests of truth required it, he faithfully announced and vindicated his claims. Though he knew that the consequence would be his own death he shunned not to declare to the Jewish Sanhedrim that they should see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

With regard to the benevolence of Christ, his appearance upon earth was an examplification of it. The love which we owe our fellow-creatures is pre-eminently characterised by delight in their happiness, a heartfelt desire to promote their real welfare. The mind in which it dwells glows with good will to the whole creation; and in regard to mankind, sincerely wishes that their health, virtue, peace, and prosperity, may be increased and continued. But while all have failed in that benevolence which they owe to others, as well as in the piety which is due to God, Christ exhibited by his ministry, miracles, sufferings, and death, the most perfect love to man. He went about continually doing good, diminishing by his works of mercy the sum of human misery, generously extending his beneficence to his enemies as well as to his friends, and unweariedly pursued his course of duty and usefulness, notwithstanding the malevolence and ingratitude with which he was treated. The display of tenderness and compassion in his conduct towards the inhabitants of Jerusalem will awaken the admiration of all who are capable of being moved by what is sublime in moral character. Even He who wielded the omnipotent power of God wept when he beheld this city. Every consideration of patriotism, humanity, compassion to souls, deeply affected him, and led him to deplore those calamities which their wilful impenitence rendered him unable to avert from them. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not."

He perseveres in the same course of disinterested benevolence. No insults could prevent him from shewing kindness and good-will to mankind. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many: and the malignity, derision, treachery, and suffering which assailed him, could not move him away from his purpose. The insults which were offered to him on the cross hindered him not from expressing his compassion in the memorable prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." While his benevolence was universal, and reached to all the families of mankind, he improved present opportunities by doing good to all around him. His goodness was constantly operative and diffusive, and conveyed temporal and spiritual blessings to the poor, the destitute, the diseased, and the miserable. The generous object which he pursued, for which he laboured and suffered, for which he lived and died, was the redemption of the human race: and to attain this he closed his career of unparalleled benevolence by presenting himself an offering and sacrifice to God.

But let us further view the manner in which Christ as a man discharged the duties which he owed to himself. The more remarkable of these are, contentment, forti-

tude, industry, and a suitable regard to self-happiness. With regard to the first, contentment, Christ exhibited throughout his life a cheerful acquiescence in the allotment of providence, gratitude for the mercies which were enjoyed, and perfect freedom from the evil affections of covetousness and ambition. He employed his mighty power in one instance only for the supply of his own wants; and while he never used it for purposes of self-aggrandizement, he declined the honours which the multitude would fain have conferred upon him.

His fortitude also was very conspicuous. Under the unparalleled sorrows which he endured this was never shaken. He, indeed, indicated both in Gethsemane and on the Cross the exquisite sensibilities of a holy nature; but in place of yielding to despondency, he spoke of the triumphant issue of his sufferings, and assured a dying malefactor of admission with himself into the paradise of God. Though his sufferings were always in his view, because they were from the beginning well known to him, he endured them without a murmur; and with invincible courage, when his hour had arrived, delivered himself up to his enemies. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Nor was his industry less remarkable. He improved his talents and opportunities to an extent which would almost seem to surpass the reach of humanity.

He was laborious in the discharge of his ministry—travelling through extensive regions preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God—instructing his disciples—performing works of kindness and mercy—and so intent on finishing his work as scarcely to allow himself sufficient time for repose and refreshment. "I must work," said he, "the works of Him that sent me, while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work." His life was full of piety to God, and of beneficent actions to man.

Such was the character of Christ, the great high-priest of our profession. His life passed, not in retirement, but in the midst of mankind, and filled up with incessant action, does not exhibit to the strictest scrutiny a single blemish. He was absolutely holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

Let us now more fully consider how far this holiness of nature and character was necessary. This is indispensably requisite to the true happiness of every intelligent creature. But to Christ who sustained a public character, as the Mediator of a fallen world, it was necessary not only that he should be holy, but that his perfect holiness should be manifested to the view of the universe. It therefore behoved him to exhibit in his life the piety, benevolence, uprightness, fidelity, meekness, humility, and the completely virtuous character which the law requires.

In this way he magnified the law and made it honour-

able. By rendering obedience to the law of God in all the forms in which obedience is due, he shewed its equity and reasonableness, and that it was capable of being perfectly obeyed by mankind. If he, as man, after he became a moral agent, did not fail in a single duty, either in its principle or in the manner of its performance, on what ground can we account for the failure of every other individual of the human race, however distinguished? The greatest benefactors of mankind, those who have adorned the annals of the world by their genius, philanthropy, and practical wisdom, have acknowledged and exhibited their sinfulness. But Christ, without effort, shewed in views, feelings, motives, and actions, an entire conformity to the divine standard of holiness. He gave this faultless obedience in our nature; and thus proved, that our deficiencies are not owing to any thing rigorous and unreasonable in the demands of the law, but to an alienation of mind from God, and a moral obliquity of character. He has practically demonstrated that the blame of that obvious dissimilarity between the best of men and the perfect standard of virtue, rests with us, and is to be traced to the depraved disposition of the mind, and not with that law which is holy, just, spiritual, and good. The holiness of his person, life, and character, furnishes an impressive exposition of the nature and extent of the law. The bright assemblage of virtues which he exhibited reflected such light upon the charac-

ter and government of God, that we may feel as well as see the excellency of all his requirements, and the beauty of that perfect holiness which these requirements exact. His conduct shews us the precise import of every precept of the law—the nature of that piety which is included in loving the Lord God with the whole heart, mind, and soul,—of that benevolence which is denoted by loving our neighbours as ourselves,—and of that self-government which is implied in the proper regulation of our affections and desires. He exemplified in himself the whole law, and taught us what and how we are to obey, as well as the loveliness and desirableness of uniform obedience.

But the obedience of Christ magnified the law and made it honourable, because it was the obedience of a person of infinite dignity and worth. In his divine nature he is the mighty God, who has created and who upholds all things, a Being absolutely independent, and who, so far from being under the law, is himself the lawgiver to the universe. He voluntarily united himself to the human nature to accomplish the infinitely important purposes of our redemption. His transcendent dignity, as a Being possessed of omnipotence, eternity, immutability, and sovereign dominion, gave an unbounded value to his obedience. Though he could neither obey nor suffer as God, the acts of his human nature were the acts of one Person, God and man, Christ Jesus, and were therefore, infinitely meri-

torious. He gave to the law that practical homage which mankind had refused to render to it,—the highest honour which it was possible to confer upon it, the perfect obedience, during his whole life, of a Being of transcendent dignity and glory. He reflected by his services, which were uniformly and universally performed, a lustre upon the divine authority and government, which the united obedience of all created beings could never communicate; and vindicated by his own personal subjection to their claims, their entire equity and goodness.

It was, besides, necessary that our great High-Priest should be perfectly holy, in order to constitute him an Object of supreme moral regard to mankind. For this important purpose, it was fit that he should not only be holy, but prove himself to be so by placing himself in those circumstances in which he might shew, during a length of time, the excellencies of his person, the completeness of his virtue, his unceasing love to God and man, and the divine beauty and amiableness of his character. Heathen philosophers were accustomed to say, that the virtuous man enduring afflictions, and acting with perfect propriety under them, was a spectacle which the Deity beholds with complacency. He who is the Image of the Invisible God, exercised the most perfect virtue, and rendered to the law a sinless obedience in circumstances of great and continued privation and suffering. He was characterized, in con-

sequence of his unexampled distresses, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But amid his varied, multiplied, and exquisite sufferings, he still displays the same innocence, the same supreme regard to God, and to his glory, the same cordial resignation to his appointments, the same tenderness, meekness, forbearance, and compassion towards mankind. He was unaffected by temptation, was calm under indignity and provocation, he prayed for forgiveness to his enemies, and with a generosity which has met, and which will ever receive the gratulations of Holy intelligences, he persevered in his disinterested undertaking till he had proclaimed, "It is finished."

After surveying the life of this wonderful Person, are we not constrained to say, "He hath done all things well?" Does not the perfection of his character exhibit him to the view of mankind as a Being who is on every ground entitled to their supreme moral regard? Has he not developed the beauty of holiness in such a way, and in such peculiar circumstances, as must come home to the feelings and the hearts of all who are capable of being affected with what is pure and sublime in moral character and conduct? Must we not say respecting Him, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: thou art the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely?" Thou hast left us an example that we might follow thy steps.

Finally, the holiness of Christ as our great High-

Priest was necessary to render his sufferings efficacious for us. It has already been observed, that had he been chargeable with one sin, he would have required an atonement for himself, and consequently would have been utterly incapable of making expiation for mankind. It was fit, not only that he should be holy, but that by a life of most perfect obedience to the law of God, it should be manifest that he was so,—before he could offer himself as a sacrifice for sin. This last act was the greatest possible proof of his perfect obedience: and hence the Apostle says, "that he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

CHAP. IV.

THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD.

THE necessity of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ has been occasioned by the introduction of sin. On the supposition that mankind were to be delivered from guilt and ruin, the law, justice, and moral government of God required that adequate atonement should be made; that a person of perfect innocence and infinite worth should be found to render the satisfaction due; that he should be one in whom both parties might place entire confidence; and thus be qualified to act as a successful mediator between God and man. To attain these ends, it was farther necessary, as has been already shown, that the person who should voluntarily undertake the work of mediation should assume our nature; should become in regard to the economy of redemption the servant of the Father, and yield universal obedience unto him; and that he should so interpose himself between the inflictions of offended justice and those whom he came to save, that their redemption might be secured in full consistency with the glory of God.

Hence the origin and necessity of the priesthood of

Christ. He was consecrated to this office by the special call and appointment of God. He glorified not himself to be made an high-priest; but was so constituted by him that said unto him, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." He was inaugurated by the unction of the Holy Spirit when anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above all his precursors who had been successively raised up to prefigure him. Chosen by infinite wisdom and mercy for the accomplishment of an undertaking of unequalled greatness, he is in regard to the fulness and perfection of his qualifications such an high-priest as the character of God rendered necessary; and such an high-priest as became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself.

This excellency of Christ's priesthood appears from the dignity of his person, the perfect purity of his character, the reality and efficacy of his sacrifice, the power and prevalence of his intercession, the perpetuity of his priesthood viewed in connexion with the stability of the covenant of which he is Mediator, and the glorious ends which it attains. From the consideration of these topics, even with the brevity to which we are necessarily restricted, the infinite superiority of

Christ as the great high-priest of our profession will be clearly made manifest.

I. This appears from the dignity of his person. Those who were appointed by the Mosaic law to prefigure the priestly office of Christ were men of like infirmities with ourselves. Previously to their making atonement for the sins of the people they were required to offer up sacrifice for their own. Their ministry was restricted to a very few years, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But with regard to Christ, because he has life in himself, he continueth ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood. The wonderful constitution of his person, while it divinely fitted him to mediate between God and man, exalts him far above comparison with any created being. He who became the High-Priest of his church, and who made reconciliation for iniquity, is the image of the invisible God; the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express representation of his person; is himself God manifested in the flesh, the mighty God, —God over all, and blessed for evermore. Of him it is declared that he gave existence to all things; that he still preserves them; that though possessing the nature and glory of God he willingly engaged to become Surety for us; that in pursuance of this voluntary engagement, he made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The dignity of this divine person, therefore, infinitely surpasses our conceptions. As God, he is eternal and unchangeable in his being, infinite in his power, wisdom, holiness, and truth: his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,—from the beginning, or ever the earth was; before the mountains were settled; before the hills did he exist in the fulness of his all-sufficiency. His assumption of human nature for the purpose of exercising the priestly office in offering himself a sacrifice to God, has given infinite worth to his mediation, and renders it inconceivably great and glorious. Its excellency must have been feebly and inadequately exhibited by the sons of Aaron; who derived honour and dignity from the typical nature of the duties which they were consecrated to discharge; and who could not, by any oblation which they had it in their power to render, efficaciously take away the guilt of sin. Christ, on the contrary, conferred value upon all that he did and suffered; upon his deepest abasement, his privations, poverty, agony, and atoning death. He was still, and in every period of his course, possessed of uncreated glory; the beloved Son of God in whom he was well-pleased; and the rank and character of the person who stooped so low that he might rescue from ruin the children of disobedience communicated proportionable worth to his humiliation and sacrifice.

The dignity of his person continues to convey excel-

lency and efficacy to his priesthood. He rose from the dead by virtue of the power and life essentially inherent in him. While as the great High-Priest of good things to come he passed into the heavens, he ascended as the Lord of glory, who was capable of exercising the universal power and authority with which he was invested. As a Divine Being, exercising the mediatorial character, he lives for evermore ;—lives to accomplish the purposes of his death, and to apply its benefits to his people ;—lives to make them meet for, and put them in possession of, that eternal life which he has promised them. Exalted as he is far above all heavens, having thrones, principalities, and dominions made subject unto him, it is the supreme dignity of his person, as God over all united to the human nature, which still gives excellency to his priestly office, and affords us assurance that it will ever be exercised with unerring wisdom, and infinite efficiency. On this ground he proclaims himself to be the Living One who was dead, but who is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death. He commands all the nations of the earth to look unto him, and be saved, because he is God, and there is none else.

II. The excellency and superiority of Christ's priesthood arise from the perfect purity of his character. Having already said so much on this topic, our remarks at present shall be brief. This was impressively signified by the various ablutions and ceremonies which

were enjoined to the typical high-priest at his consecration; and were designed to denote, that he who ministered between God and sinful men must himself be holy. In regard to the immaculate holiness of the Redeemer, a subject of high importance, the testimony of Scripture is full and decisive. It informs us that a body was miraculously prepared for him; that while he grew in stature he was always holy in thought, word, and action; that his enemies were incapable of charging him with a single instance of imprudence or blameworthiness; that the disciple who betrayed him acknowledged that he had sinned in his treacherous conduct to an innocent person; that the judge who condemned him declared that he could find no fault in him; and that he was altogether such an high-priest as became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Unlike the sons of Aaron who represented him, who were personally sinful, and who were sometimes obliged to refrain from the exercise of the priestly office in consequence of the defilement which they contracted, the great High-Priest who presides over the church of God was perfectly pure, was all that the law of God required him to be, and dwelt among guilty men free from contamination. In him there was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

Thus, was he fitted to mediate between God and sinful men. He was qualified to make such an atone-

ment for their iniquities as was worthy of the Righteous Governor of the universe to accept. The full obedience which he rendered exhibited the extent of the law, vindicated its authority and obligation, and reflected the highest glory on its enactments. His perfect obedience was inseparably conjoined with his sacrifice, was absolutely necessary to its completion, and showed that he was such an high-priest as it became the majesty of heaven to appoint, and as we required to make reconciliation for us. Had not the holiness of his nature and services been immaculate, in place of becoming the substitute of sinners in bearing the penalty incurred by their transgressions, he would have required an atonement for himself, and would therefore have been totally disqualified for acting as a Saviour. It was because he knew no sin that he was accepted as a sin-offering for us. It was as the Holy One and the Just that he suffered in room of the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.

It is in his perfect holiness that Christ as a man is peculiarly distinguished and separate from all other men. The wisest and the best of mankind, however elevated by their intellectual and moral endowments, have been erring and sinful mortals. They required in common with the whole race a mediator who should expiate their guilt, and intercede for them with God. But Christ stands forth to our view, possessed of sinless perfection, and of entire conformity to the cha-

racter and will of God. He thus did honour to the equity and authority of the law which mankind had disobeyed, and the penalty of which he came to bear. The sacrifice which he was about to offer was without spot or blemish; was presented by Him who, though infinitely excellent and glorious as the Son of God, had voluntarily placed himself under the law, had complied in every instance with its requirements, and whose transcendent worth as well as rank and dominion, gave to all that he did and suffered as Mediator the highest value. Having stooped to the place of a servant in obedience to the will of the Father, having so gloriously displayed his character, and magnified his government and law in the sight of the universe, with what propriety does he exercise the priestly and intercessory office, and with what boundless efficacy must its exercise be attended?

III. The excellency of his priesthood appears from the reality and efficacy of his sacrifice. The high-priest, indeed, under the Mosaic economy, who prefigured the Redeemer, offered gifts and sacrifices unto God; more especially on the day of annual atonement; when after having presented an oblation, he carried the blood of the victim within the vail, and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. But his offering possessed no intrinsic value: it afforded no adequate representation of the evil of sin, and the satisfaction which was due to offended justice; and

was unworthy, therefore, of the Majesty of heaven to accept as a real expiation for sin. The typical high-priests could never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

But that which the legal high-priest offered merely as a typical representation, the great High-Priest of our profession offered really and in substance. When God had declared that in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin he had no pleasure; neither could regard them as worthy of his acceptance, then said he, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Having assumed the nature of man, he willingly went up to Jerusalem, when the appointed period had arrived, to offer himself a sacrifice unto God. "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, said he to his disciples, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death." Preparatory to his sacrifice he went into the garden of Gethsemane, where he endured that agony which occasioned his sweat to be as great

drops of blood falling down to the ground, and where he offered prayers and supplications unto God. Though the agency of wicked hands was employed in his crucifixion, the oblation which he presented was voluntary; for no man could take his life from him; He loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God. He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows;—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.—He poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.

Hence, it appears, that Christ is not figuratively but really a priest; and that he presented unto God a true sacrifice for sin. Its intrinsic excellency rendered a repetition unnecessary. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Its efficacy is boundless and perpetual; and is regarded by God the judge of all as a most honourable ground on which to bestow pardon and eternal life. It is with reference to its everlasting efficacy that he has issued a proclamation in which he beseeches all men to be reconciled to him; assuring them that the blood of

Christ cleanseth from all sin; that he came into the world to save sinners, even the chief; that the virtue of his atonement extends to the most aggravated offences; that if men will penitentially accept of it, though their sins were as scarlet they should become white as snow, and though they were red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

In speaking of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice we are to recall to our remembrance the dignity and rank of the person who offered it. His infinite excellency as the Son of God rendered it a complete expiation for the sins of the world; through which God may convey in consistency with his character and government, not only pardon, but the highest glory and happiness. In testimony of God's satisfaction with the work which he commissioned the Mediator to accomplish, he declared his approbation of it by raising him from the dead; by receiving him out of the sight of his disciples into heaven; by admitting him to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him. The reconciliation which he made for iniquity is thus announced by God the judge of all as well-pleasing to him; and as a sufficient ground on which to free from condemnation and receive into everlasting kindness all the children of men who flee to it for refuge.

The exalted glory to which he is advanced prove how truly he had performed the main duty of the

priestly office in presenting a real sacrifice unto God. He, the Great High-Priest, has passed into the heavens, the true holy place, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. "No mortal dared," says Michaelis, "to venture upon entering the most holy place, except the high-priest alone, who, once in every year, not without apprehension of death, (for death would be the consequence of the slightest oversight in performing the ceremonies,) and with the blood of expiation, entered into this terrible and sacred darkness. To sit down at all in the most holy place would have been a rashness and insult unheard of: but for a person to place his seat close to the cherubim, at the right hand of the invisible God who dwelt above them, would have been strictly equivalent to declaring himself God, and requiring to be adored as God.—When therefore Jehovah says to the Lord, the king and priest of the race of David, 'Sit thou at my right hand;' it is in the highest sense equivalent to saying, Enjoy with me divine honour and adoration: be the object of all the religious service of my people."

The boundless efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrifice also appears, from his ability to save to the uttermost. This ability implies, and is founded upon, the sufficiency of the atonement. It might, indeed, be inferred from his having been appointed to come into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. It was not in vain that God announced in reference to the work

of redeeming mercy accomplished by him, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation."* The power of Christ as a Saviour might be inferred from his own glorious character; from the mysterious constitution of his person as God and man, from the zeal and unparalleled benevolence with which, though he was rich, for our sake he made himself poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. It was impossible that this Divine Person, so appointed, so qualified and so disposed, to work out the salvation of man, should fail in his mighty undertaking; and should not, after he had travelled in the greatness of his strength, reach that lofty throne of universal dominion and sovereignty from which he proclaims his ability to save to the uttermost.

His power to save must be unbounded, in consequence of his having removed by his complete atonement every hinderance to the communication of redeeming mercy. That mercy which was previously restrained in its exercise to sinners by the consideration of what was due to the dishonoured law and moral government of God, may now be freely imparted according to the sovereign pleasure of the Most High, since the claims of justice are fully satisfied, and that attribute exhibited in its brightest lustre and glory in the work of human redemption. Is not the honour conferred upon the law by the voluntary obedience of the Son of God

* Isa. xxviii. 16.

infinitely greater than it could receive from the united obedience of all created and intelligent beings? He has taken away its curse by bearing it in his own body on the tree. There being then, no longer any obstruction to the full conveyance of his grace to sinful man, and no limit to the application of the efficacy of his sacrifice, but the divine will, how great must be his power to save, whose love to mankind brought him down to the cross, and who is exalted for the purpose of bestowing repentance, and the forgiveness of sins. How glorious does he appear in the exercise of his priesthood, not merely as he was seen in the days of his humiliation, when he gave himself a ransom for many, but as he is exalted to heaven in the character of a Saviour, invested with this character by the sovereign Ruler of the universe, and possessing ability to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him!

This ability is unlimited: all power in heaven and on earth is given to him. It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. What are the obstacles which he cannot overcome? What are the enemies which the Almighty arm that has already gotten the victory cannot subdue? If he came into the world to save sinners, even the chief, is not he capable by the virtue of his oblation, by the power of his Spirit, and by his own omnipotent control and agency, of carrying this design into full effect? Deep

and aggravated as may be the guilt of those who come to God by him, it cannot surpass in demerit the efficacy of the sacrifice which he offered. He justifies from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. He has only to speak the word, and the dead in trespasses and in sins are quickened, the unclean sanctified, the spiritually diseased made whole, and the captives are made free. He can deliver the prey from the hand of the mighty, render unavailing the artifices of the adversary, communicate strength to his people to persevere in the ways of holiness unto the end, and keep them by his mighty power unto eternal life. He can deliver them in the greatest extremity, support them in death itself, recall their bodies from the tomb, and fashion them like unto his own glorious body. He can save them always, and to the uttermost.

He has actually displayed his ability to save, and consequently the mighty efficacy of his sacrifice, in innumerable instances. Among the many myriads to whom the gospel has been rendered the power of God unto salvation, how many cases are there which peculiarly illustrate the extent and value of his atonement, the excellency of the remedy which he has procured, the freeness of his grace, and the greatness of his compassion! Men of all nations, ranks, and characters, persons who have been pre-eminent in disobedience to God, and who have been justly reckoned the chief of

sinners, have been justified, sanctified, and washed, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. When we reflect on the wretched condition of guilt and pollution from which each has been raised of that great multitude which no man can number, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and who are now before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his holy temple, have we not demonstration the most complete of the reality and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, and of his ability to save to the uttermost?

IV. The excellency of Christ's priesthood appears from the prevalence and perpetuity of his intercession. This forms a necessary part of his priestly office, and is the continuance of its exercise in heaven. It was typically represented by the entrance of the high-priest within the vail, bearing on his breast the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and having the blood of the victim that had been slain to sprinkle upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. In like manner, the great High-Priest of good things to come has passed into the heavens, not with the blood of bulls or of goats, but with his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. He bears the names of his redeemed upon his heart; not one of them is forgotten by Him before his Father; while he is divinely appointed and constituted their Advocate; presents the plea of his perfect oblation on their behalf; and ever

liveth to make intercession for them. In allusion to the incense which in the daily ministration of the earthly sanctuary was burned before the Lord on the golden altar, he is represented as standing at the altar of that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, having a censer full of much incense, the smoke of which ascends up with the prayers of saints before God. His own presence in heaven, in that same nature in which he obeyed and suffered on earth, in which he bore the sins, and carried the sorrows of his people, is virtually a perpetual pleading on their behalf. For in his ascension into heaven he identified himself with them; having gone with official dignity and glory as their Mediator and Forerunner, to conduct to their final completion the purposes of his humiliation and death, and to appear before their Father and his Father, their God and his God. His intercession is maintained, not as it was sometimes on earth with strong crying and tears, but in a manner corresponding to the honour and authority to which he is exalted at the right hand of God. "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

That his intercession on behalf of his people is ever efficacious and successful is undoubted. It is founded upon an atonement which the Supreme Moral Governor of the universe has declared to be satisfactory and complete; and who, in testimony of his approbation,

has exalted the Redeemer far above all heavens. Can we suppose it possible that the Advocate with the Father should fail in pleading the cause of his people when we consider the glory of his person as the Son of God, and the universal sovereignty and dominion expressly assigned to him as their Friend and Mediator? Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. If the Intercessor himself be thus excellent and meritorious, and infinitely deserving of all that he can ever ask; if the blessings which he solicits be the fruit of the travail of his soul, the purchase of that precious blood which he shed in making reconciliation for iniquity; if the persons for whom he pleads be the objects of the Father's love, on whose account he spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the death for them all,—then is it certain that his intercession must always prevail in regard to the eternal happiness of all for whom it is exerted. For, who shall successfully "lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather who is risen again, who is even at the

right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The actual exercise of this continual and prevailing intercession exhibits the Great High-Priest of our profession in a light unspeakably amiable, and infinitely glorious. Who but a person truly divine, whose omniscient knowledge extends to the hearts and the circumstances of all his people; who has power to administer in justice and in judgment the government of that universal kingdom which is intrusted to him; and who can relieve, protect, and guide those who confide in him,—who but a person possessed of these attributes, could conduct the intercession exercised by the Redeemer? It also presents him to our view in the character of the most perfect amiability and loveliness: as continuing deeply to interest himself amid the glories of the heavenly world in each individual of his redeemed people; as watching over them every moment with the tenderest compassion; as constantly listening to their prayers, mingled as they are with manifold imperfections; as feeding his flock like a shepherd, and gathering the lambs with his arm. He is thus such an high-priest as became us; justly entitled to our love and confidence; and claims the honour due to an all-sufficient and divine Saviour.

V. The excellency of his priesthood will appear when viewed in connexion with the stability of the covenant of which he is Surety and Mediator. This view

of the subject is presented by the Apostle when he says concerning him, But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. It was more excellent than that of the legal high-priests whose ministry was temporary, not only because it was that of mortal men, but on account of its connexion with a covenant which was of limited duration:—the covenant which was made with Israel at Mount Sinai; which afforded an impressive representation of the covenant of works with its sanction and malediction; which served to direct the church through the medium of typical rites and sacrifices to the fulfilment of the great promise; and the new and living way opened up to the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. But the covenant of which he is mediator is far more excellent, on account of the nature of the promises on which it is founded, the abundant manner in which its blessings are communicated, and its perpetual inviolability.

The promises upon which it is founded are comprehensive of great and spiritual blessings. They proceed solely from the free favour and love of God, and secure to his people chosen in Christ, the pardon of sin, justification in his sight, the renovation and purification of their nature by the Holy Spirit, perseverance in faith and holiness to the end, consolation and support in afflictions and distresses, victory over death,

and the possession of immortal glory and happiness in that heavenly kingdom which it is their Father's good pleasure to give them. While they are assured that all things shall be made to work together for their good, they have promises adapted to their varying exigencies, and promises which will receive their fulfilment through the ages of eternity.

The blessings of this covenant are not only abundant, but they are plentifully communicated. The influences of the Holy Spirit which were bestowed sparingly under the former dispensation, are now poured out like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth. Under the old covenant the people were continually reminded of their distance from God; and the ordinances of their worship had a tendency to produce a spirit of bondage; but under the administration of the covenant of which Christ is mediator, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh; and having an high-priest over the house of God we may draw near in the full confidence of faith. These are now pressed upon the acceptance of all, and really communicated to those who do accept all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus;—reconciliation with God, a title to eternal life through the faith of Christ, the adoption of children, peace and joy in believing, everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.

The inviolability of the covenant of which these are the promises and the blessings is perfect and perpetual. Its provisions of mercy are complete and unalterable; resting not upon the stability of man, but on the power, truth, and faithfulness of God,—the reality and sufficiency of the Saviour's mediation;—and the unchangeableness of the divine purpose. They are the mercies which are included in that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure; and respecting which God hath said, that the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but that his kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of his peace be broken. If the grace in which it has had its origin, the richness and variety of the blessings it conveys, and its eternal duration, show how excellent and glorious must be the priesthood of him who is its Surety and Mediator, it is impossible that with such a Surety and Mediator to fulfil its conditions, and to secure the full accomplishment of all its designs, it should ever be disannulled through inefficacy and weakness. God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel or covenant, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.

The perpetuity of the covenant involves the unchangeableness of Christ's priesthood. His ministry

is the more excellent that it can never pass from him to another. As he himself is the Living One, and lives for evermore, the covenant of peace of which he is mediator is also eternal. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament: and while the ministers of the old covenant were many priests, "because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death;" this Great High-Priest, "because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

VI. The excellency of Christ's priesthood appears from the glorious purposes which it attains. These are numerous and infinitely important; but they may be considered as included in and connected with the salvation of his people, and the glory of God. The last of these, namely, the glory of God, was the primary end for which the Son of God assumed the priestly office, and continues for ever to discharge its duties. The magnitude and grandeur of this purpose render it worthy the incarnation of Him who though in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. However indifferent apostate creatures feel in regard to the manifestation and advancement of the glory of the Being of all perfection,

who is himself the source of all excellency and happiness, there can be no doubt, that it is the chief and the ultimate end for which all things exist, and are preserved in existence, by the creating power of God.

It is also the chief and the ultimate end of the formation and accomplishment of the scheme of human redemption, through the humiliation, sacrifice, and continued intercession of a Person truly Divine. In him, and in his great work of redeeming mercy, the glorious character and attributes of God are displayed with brightest effulgence: these are new and affecting views presented to the universe of the unsearchable wisdom, the inflexible justice, and the unbounded love of God. The free bestowment of his Son for the recovery of a lost world is a demonstration of the kindness and benignity of his nature infinitely greater than all the other blessings which he may communicate through the ages of eternity.

By the exercise of his priestly office, in union with the other parts of his mediatorial character, Christ brings the highest possible measure of glory to the divine nature and government. He himself has not only restored that which he took not away, the honour of God's authority and law, but he continues to bring myriads of the intelligent subjects of his moral government, who were lost to the purposes of their being, who had alienated their hearts and affections from him that made them, who had assumed in regard to him

a hostile attitude, and who were on the brink of irretrievable ruin,—he brings them to a sense and acknowledgment of their guilt, to a cordial surrender of themselves to God, to be deeply concerned for his glory, and to become the voluntary and active instruments in promoting it through the endless ages of eternity. The holy and happy intelligences throughout the universe, angels and archangels, all have received, and will continue to receive, an impulse in the ways of holiness and of God, from the new aspects in which the character of God is presented by the work of redeeming love, and from the powerful influence which issues from this work even to them. Through the blood of his cross, Christ may be said to reconcile all things unto God, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven: and thus by his priesthood he has laid the foundation on which the unnumbered myriads of holy beings will happily and harmoniously combine in advancing the kingdom, and in lifting high, the glories of Jehovah.

In connexion with the glory of God, the other great end attained by the priesthood of Christ is the complete salvation of his people. In respect to this great purpose the help of all created beings was vain: he only had the power and the necessary qualifications for its accomplishment. The objects of his gracious interposition were in a state of most imminent danger; incapable of averting it; unable to atone for their offences, or to recover themselves

from final apostasy and ruin. But he shewed himself to be able to save to the uttermost in this extremity; with the love and condescension peculiar to God, he came down from the abode of his glory, and said, Deliver from going down to the pit; for I will become the ransom. I looked, and there was none to help: and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me. The deliverance which he wrought out is so perfect, that its efficacy retrospectively reached to the time of sin's first introduction; extends to the limits of the world; and is to continue beyond the consummation of all things. So great is his power as a Saviour that even in his deepest humiliation, when despised and rejected of men, he exercised the prerogative of the Supreme Moral Governor of the universe, by forgiving penitents their trespasses, and by declaring to the humble suppliant who implored his compassionate remembrance when he came into his kingdom, that on that very day he should be with him in paradise. So great is his power as a Saviour, that of all those who have been given him he will lose none; and none who come to him will he in any wise cast out. The generations of mortal men rapidly pass away; but the efficacy of the atonement and intercession connected with his priesthood, and the mighty energy of his regenerating and saving grace, are immutable like himself, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. These will

gloriously appear in those blissful regions where the ransomed of the Lord from all the kindreds and nations of the world shall assemble; where they will joyfully own in songs of praise the redeeming power of Him who washed them from their sins in his own blood; who will continue for ever to preside over them, to feed them and lead them to fountains of living water, while God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

VII. The priesthood of Christ stands alone and unrivalled. He has neither partner nor successor in this office. He was made priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, not to minister during a figurative and temporary dispensation, but after the power of an endless life. "For it was testified concerning him, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest. For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swore, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better covenant. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled,

separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high-priests who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

BOOK III.

ON THE ATONEMENT.

CHAP. I.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST IN ROOM OF SINFUL MEN.

The supreme contrivance of the work of human redemption, is in scripture peculiarly ascribed to the person of God the Father. His grace, love, wisdom, and good pleasure, are represented as the original and eternal springs of all the blessings which mankind are to enjoy through our Lord Jesus Christ. To him also are attributed the appointment of the Mediator to his office, the communication to him of strength and power requisite for his undertaking, and the rewarding of his obedience with dignity and glory.

The topic to which I shall at present confine my attention is, the substitution of Christ in room of sinners.

That the Son of God, a person of divine dignity and glory, should be manifested in our world, and should suffer and die, form a great and astonishing mystery which awakens the earnest attention, and sur-

passes the conceptions of angels. This surely must have taken place for the accomplishment of designs of transcendent excellency and greatness. The magnitude of the object to be attained, must bear some proportion to the extraordinary and costly nature of the means.

According to the Socinians, the sufferings and death of Christ were intended merely to confirm the doctrine which he taught; to set before us an example of piety and resignation to the will of God; and to assure us of the love of our Heavenly Father. With regard to the first of these ends, the confirmation of his doctrine, that carries evidence along with it of its coming from God, in addition to the attestation of miracles. If it was not necessary for Moses to have laid down his life in proof of his having taught by a divine commission,—if of that there was sufficient evidence without his death, why should it have been necessary by such means to seal the heavenly origin of the doctrine of Christ? His sufferings on that account might have been dispensed with. With respect to the second design, the setting before us an example of piety and resignation to the will of God, it is admitted that he by the purity of his character, by the meekness, gentleness, patience, humility, and self-denial which he showed in life and in death, has presented a bright pattern for the imitation of his followers. Apostolic authority teaches us that Christ also suffered for us,

leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. But had there been no higher end to be attained by the death of Christ than this, his death would have been unnecessary. For God could have sustained us under the greatest trials, although he had not set before us the example of his Son. This therefore was not a ground on which the sufferings of Christ were peculiarly required.

Nor does the third reason assigned for the death of our Saviour, namely, to assure us of the love of God, furnish an adequate cause for this great event. For, though the sending of his Son into the world to make an atonement for sin, and to give his life a ransom for many, forms the highest possible proof of the love of God; yet, on the supposition of Socinians, that no atonement for sin was intended to be made by his sufferings, his death was altogether unnecessary. For surely an ordinary messenger from heaven, sufficiently accredited such as one of the prophets, was qualified to announce to the human race, the compassion of God.

The death of a divine person for such ends as these was not required, and had it taken place merely for such purposes, would have been altogether inexplicable. It was necessary for those who hold these tenets, in order to give consistency to their views, to attempt to lower the nature of the Son of God to the level of mortal man: and thus to exhibit some proportion between the character of the sufferer and the designs

proposed to be attained by his death. If the designs be of a very ordinary nature, so also is the person and the means, according to their theory, by whom they are accomplished.

But how very different are the representations of scripture both in regard to the person of Christ, and the ends for which he came into the world! According to these, He came to save that which was lost;—to give his life a ransom for many;—to give himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:—to give himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. He is set forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood; and his death is our reconciliation with God, by removing and slaying the enmity between him and us. The effect of his obedience unto death is the justification of all who believe on him, by their acquittal from the guilt of sin, their redemption from the curse of the law, in consequence of Christ's substitution in their room, and by their peace and acceptance with God. They are also purified by the blood of Christ from the pollution of sin, renewed in the image of God, and made the temples of the Holy Ghost. They are, in virtue of his atoning sacrifice, adopted into the family of God, invested with the privileges of his sons and daughters, and made heirs of a glorious and an everlasting inheritance.

The accomplishment of these great ends presupposes the actual substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty. The testimony of scripture most fully affirms the reality of such substitution in regard to the incarnation and death of the Son of God. "He hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."— The substitution of Christ implies,

I. The perfect purity and righteousness of God, and the guilt and pollution of mankind. Unless all had sinned and come short of the glory of God, and had exposed themselves to his displeasure, there could have been no occasion for a Divine person to interpose for their deliverance. His interposition presupposes their helplessness and demerit; that they were undone, ruined, and lost, in themselves; and that none of them could by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. It also implies the purity and perfection of God, who though he be full of compassion, is also holy and righteous, and will by no means clear the guilty. His infinite hatred to sin disposes

him to punish the sinner; and to render tribulation and wrath to every soul that doth evil. As the Supreme Governor and Judge of all it belongs to him to do what is right; to hinder the disorder and misery which sin diffuses over the creation; and to make the consequences of transgression revert on the violators of his law. It was his boundless perfection—his infinite righteousness, that rendered it necessary, before sinners could be saved, that an adequate atonement should be made by the substitution of another in their room. It was unbecoming the majesty of the Ruler of earth and heaven to receive them into his favour, to hold gracious intercourse with them, while his justice remained unsatisfied, his law dishonoured, his truth impeached, and while we were under the malediction, and liable to the penalty of a broken covenant. It was necessary that these barriers should be removed before God could return in loving-kindness and in mercy to diffuse life and gladness over the regions of spiritual death: and the great object which Christ had in view, by placing himself in our room, was, their removal; and thus to reflect such honour by his obedience and sacrifice on the character, authority, and government of God, as would more than compensate for the reproach which man's transgression directed against his Maker:—and would exhibit the divine glory with such effulgence in human redemption as to make it comport with all the attributes of God to receive rebels and enemies

into favour, and invest them with the privileges of children.

II. The substitution of Christ implies that this was the appointment of the Father, and that this appointment was accepted of by the Son. "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here we are called to adore the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the love of God, in fixing on the recovery of mankind whom he might have left to utter ruin; and in providing for their redemption by the interposition of his own Son, while he passed by the angels that sinned. That purpose of grace which rendered it necessary that He who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, should become a man of sorrows, and die an ignominious death, had its origin in eternity: and we may regard the numerous promises which were made to him, as indicating the willingness of the Father that he should undertake the work, and as encouragements to him to enter on its discharge. It was required of him that he should assume the nature of those whom, according to the terms of this covenant, he was to redeem;—that he should for a season veil his glory, make himself of no reputation, take upon him the form of a servant, humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;—that he should be the servant of the Father, and yield him entire obedience both in

regard to that universal law to which all are subject, and to the plan of redeeming mercy which he was to accomplish;—and that he should by his sufferings and death make such an atonement as would glorify the righteousness of God, and form a foundation upon which God might justify penitent and believing sinners.

With these requirements, Christ with infinite grace and condescension complied. He said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Deliver from going down to the pit; for I will become the ransom. When all other methods of recovery failed;—when all inferior sacrifices were declared to be insufficient, he voluntarily engaged, notwithstanding of the difficulties which were in the way, to make the necessary atonement. He became the Surety of sinners, and promised to render in his own person that obedience in which they had failed, and to bear that penalty to which they had become liable. As their Sponsor he identified himself with them, was to take their nature upon him, was to bear their griefs, and carry their sorrows, was to pay their ransom price, and to do and to suffer all that might be necessary to procure eternal redemption for them.

Hence, as the Surety or Substitute of his people, the Father addresses him; promises to furnish him with all necessary strength and power; to raise him to universal sovereignty and dominion; to manifest through him the greatness of his love, the immutability of his counsel, the holiness of his nature, his righteous-

ness, faithfulness, and wisdom. "I have laid help upon ONE that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my First-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him."*

In conformity with these declarations, and in order to complete the substitution of Christ, a body was prepared for the Son of God;—the whole human nature in all its faculties and powers, that he might be qualified to obey, and suffer and die. It was necessary that he should be allied to us by the actual participation of our nature, that he might be capable of acting on our behalf, and of bearing the penalty in our stead. For, though he was from everlasting fitted for his undertaking by the acceptableness of his person to the Father, and by the perfection of his divine nature; yet, as obedience and suffering formed the principal

* Psalms lxxxix. 21—30; lxxii. and cx.

part of his mediatorial work, it was necessary, in order to capacitate him for its accomplishment, that he should become man.* At the appointed time a body was specially prepared for him by the Father, free from the depravity and pollution entailed upon mankind by sin:—a body like ours consisting of flesh and blood, by which a real and substantial sacrifice might be offered: and a body united to a rational and immortal soul. This human nature, prepared for Christ, though perfectly holy, was susceptible of all the sorrows and sufferings to which we are liable; was exposed to temptations from the world and Satan; and was capable of rendering unto God the most sinless obedience, and of bearing all the bitterness of the curse. In this nature he came into the world, as the Servant of the Father, as his chosen One in whom he delighted, to whom was intrusted the work of reconciling the salvation of sinners with the honour of God's holiness and justice: This leads me to remark,

III. That the substitution of Christ in room of the guilty includes the actual imputation of sin to him, and the experience of penal suffering as the consequence. He constituted himself the Sponsor of those whom he came to save, became answerable to bear all that was due to them, placed himself between them and the wrath of offended justice, and gave himself up for them, so as to die in their stead. He died for the

* Heb. ii. 10—end.

ungodly:—God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He was made a curse for us. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The Lord made to meet on him the iniquity of us all. The prophet here alludes to the manner of transferring the sins of the people, by Aaron's laying his hand on the head of the sacrifice: so that as the scape-goat bore away ceremonially and typically the transgressions of Israel, Christ, the Lamb of God, took away the sins of the world. He did so, not by bearing the pollution of them inherently, but the guilt of them, or the curse which the sinner had merited; for our sins could no more be transmitted to him in their impurity, than the iniquities of the Israelites could be infused into the scape-goat.

"Christ took our sins upon him, not thereby to become sinful, but to become devoted in a judicial manner as a curse; and therefore his being said to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, is to be explained by the expressions, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. We are not righteous before God, by an inherent, but by an imputed righteousness, nor was Christ made sin by inherent, but imputed guilt. The same way that his righteousness is communicated to us; our sin was communicated to him. Righteousness was inherent in him, but im-

puted to us; sin was inherent in us, but imputed to him; he received our evils to bestow his good; and submitted to our curse to impart to us his blessings; sustained the extremity of that wrath we had deserved, to confer on us the grace he had purchased. The sin in us which he was free from, was by divine estimation transferred upon him, as if he were guilty; that the righteousness he hath, which we were destitute of, might be transferred upon us.—On account of our sin, death was inflicted on Christ, as if he himself had sinned; and because of Christ's righteousness, life and the inheritance are conferred upon us, as if we had been righteous, and had fulfilled the law.—On both sides a connexion between these persons was required: for our sins could not have been imputed to Christ, unless he had been united to us both by the bond of the same nature and a voluntary suretyship: neither could his righteousness have been imputed to us unless we had become one body with him. Yet, they differ in this, that the imputation to Christ is according to justice, to us according to mercy."*

All this Christ did as our Surety, and in the performance of the duty which he had engaged to discharge. Having substituted himself in our room, he became bound to the law and government of God to fulfil all righteousness. The sins of his people were reckoned to his account by the Supreme Governor

* Turretin de Satisfact. p. 116.

and Judge of the universe, who was pleased to accept of him in the place of the transgressors, and by a judicial act to transfer to him their liability to penal suffering. According to this wonderful constitution, it became righteous that he should endure the penalty due to their disobedience; that he should suffer, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.

That Christ was thus really substituted in room of sinners, so that their guilt was imputed to him, the language of the Apostle already quoted, clearly proves. "He made him to be sin* for us, who knew no sin." He is here declared to be without spot and blemish, and at the same time, it is affirmed that he was made sin. How are we to understand this? The justice of God, the perfect holiness of the Redeemer's person, and the Apostle's explicit testimony, exclude the notion of his having been made sinful, or a sinner by any inherent sin. The only sense, then, in which we can conceive that God made him to be sin or a sin-offering for us, is, his having charged upon him all the sins of his people, his dealing with him, and proceeding against him, accordingly. The whole debt which they owed to the justice of God was exacted from him the Surety, and he was made answerable. The punishment due to their sin, the Father transferred, and laid upon him; and because he was charged with the

* Sin-offering, as some would render the expression: the meaning is the same either way.

guilt of others, the wrath of God, the Holy and Righteous Ruler, was poured out upon him.

What that wrath is we can but very feebly and imperfectly conceive. If it be, as we know it is, the expression of his displeasure against sin who cannot look upon iniquity,—the vindication of his offended justice who is the Sovereign and Righteous Ruler, how great and fearful must be the evils included in it! The Omniscient and Holy God, to whom all the sins and iniquities of his chosen people are known, laid the punishment due to them on One who is mighty, and who in obedience to the will of his Father, and in compassion to mankind, consented to bear it. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the instruments in fulfilling the divine purpose had taken, and by wicked hands had crucified and slain. It was God himself who dealt with him in this deeply momentous transaction; who spared him not, but delivered him up to the death for us all. Looking to the glorious effects which were to result from his atoning sacrifice, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief. It was He, who put that cup of wrath into his hand which could not pass from him till he had drunk it. It was He, who marked him out as the Victim in whom his justice was to receive satisfaction, and by whom his law was to be honoured and magnified; and it was He, who arranged and directed the means by which he was

smitten and afflicted. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts, Smite the Shepherd." It was this that made the burden of our sins overwhelming; that made his sorrow deep and unparalleled; that occasioned the darkness and agony of his soul, when he stood between a holy God and a guilty world; and that caused him to feel all the bitterness of the wrath of the Almighty in that awful hour, when God made him to be sin for us.

This is the representation of the Scriptures regarding the reality and the nature of Christ's substitution. Nor does it tend to invalidate its truth to allege, that as God was always well pleased with his Son, and repeatedly testified from heaven his delight in him, he could not therefore lay his wrath upon him. It is indeed most certain, that he was always well pleased with him, and that he loved him because of his willingness to lay down his life in obedience to the will of his Father: but he was displeased with the sins for which he made himself answerable, and which were charged to his account: he therefore spared him not from the punishment due to sin, from the curse of his violated law; but he delivered him up to the death for us all. What, then, must have been the love of God to mankind, when he thus dealt with him in whom his soul delighted, and who, as a divine person, was to him the object of infinite complacency? What

must have been his compassion to sinners, when in order to reconcile their salvation with justice, righteousness, and truth, he substituted his own Son in their room, and laid upon him the iniquity of us all.

CHAP. II.

THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THIS PROCEDURE.

Was this substitution, and this transference of punishment, consistent with strict justice? Was it right to treat a person who was perfectly innocent as if he had been guilty? Can such procedure be vindicated on principles of equity and righteousness? It was not only consistent with justice, but tended to reflect the highest honour on this property of the divine character and government, because

I. It met the approval of God the Righteous Judge. He might, indeed, have refused to accept of any atonement made by another for the sins of the human race; and have allowed the sentence of his law to take effect in the punishment of the persons who had sinned. Unless therefore He, as the Supreme Moral Governor and Judge, had consented to the substitution of Christ in room of mankind, the mediation of the Saviour, because not accepted of, could not have availed us. This was essential to the efficacy and success of the mediatorial scheme. But so fully had the concurrence of God the Father been given, that the work of human redemption, as has been already

remarked, is represented as originating in his wisdom and mercy. The Saviour was announced on his entrance into our world as the object of the Father's choice, as his Servant in accomplishing the mediatorial work, and his Elect in whom his soul delighteth. His coming into the world to save that which was lost, is represented as a special act of obedience to the will of God, and as being regarded by him with ineffable satisfaction. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

II. It was also necessary that the consent of Christ should have been given. Without this, it is obvious that the punishment due to the sins of others could not justly, nor at all, be inflicted upon him. No innocent person can, with justice, without his own full consent, be placed in room of the guilty, and dealt with accordingly; and we have absolute certainty that such procedure cannot take place under the righteous government of God.

But in regard to Christ, this consent was freely given. In language already quoted he is represented as expressing the readiness and even joy with which he undertook the work of redemption: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: burnt-offering and sin-

* John x. 17. iii. 16.

offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; —I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." It was love, free and everlasting, that made him take our help upon him, consent to suffer for our sins, and work out a righteousness for us. He loved us, and gave himself for us. It was from love that he came into the world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. His willingness to be made under the law that he might redeem us from its curse, was prefigured by the meekness and unresisting gentleness of the paschal lamb: and to his grace in voluntarily becoming poor that we through his poverty might be made rich, his sufferings and death are ascribed. It was this that made him hasten to finish his work amid difficulties and sorrows: desire the baptism of overwhelming grief with which he was to be baptized, and even feel straitened till it was accomplished. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

III. In order to render the substitution of Christ in room of the guilty consistent with justice, it was necessary not only that he should have freely consented to it, but have had power to do so. This circumstance is deserving of our particular notice; since mere consent, apart from the power to do so, could have been of no avail. The highest created being might from feelings of benevolence have felt disposed to relieve mankind from the guilt and misery in which they were

involved; but as he was absolutely at the disposal of the Creator of all things, his life was not his own to offer as a ransom for them.

But Christ is essentially and absolutely independent: he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again. He is equal with God, and therefore he had the most perfect right to act as it might please him in regard to the salvation of sinners. He was one with Jehovah, the image of the Invisible God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, who, from his own choice, and with infinite condescension, stooped so low as to be born at Bethlehem, to appear in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to endure the privations, the pains, and the death of the man of sorrows. Though possessing uncreated dignity and glory—though rich in the fulness of his own all-sufficiency—though rich as the inheritor of all things, he with unparalleled and generous kindness, made himself poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. With the readiness of boundless love he presented himself to his Father as a sacrifice for the sins of the people; and said, "Deliver them from going down to the pit; for I will become a ransom." It was with the willingness and zeal of a mind full of love to God, and of compassion to mankind, that he came down from a world of glory to a world of sinful men, from the splendour and majesty of a throne to the abasement and ignominy of a cross.

IV. It is agreeable to our views of perfect equity that He who made this generous sacrifice should receive, and be capable of receiving, the highest possible reward. If a man were to lay down his life from motives of disinterested friendship, to save his friend from destruction, our natural feelings would suggest that so generous an action is deserving of the most honourable distinction; and we should regret that the death of the person who performed it, prevented him from receiving the expressions of our good-will and admiration. In like manner, when we view the infinite abasement and sacrifice of Christ when he interposed between the wrath of a holy God and a sinful world, we feel that he is justly entitled to the highest possible reward.

His special and peculiar honour was accordingly designed in the covenant of redemption; and it was determined that it should immediately follow his substitution. He laid down his life that he might take it again, according to the commandment which he had received from the Father. As his work of humiliation and suffering was peculiar, so he was to receive in consequence peculiar honour and glory, not as God, but as Mediator. The glory which for a season he parted with, when he made himself of no reputation, he was again illustriously invested with, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, and when he was glorified with the Father, with that glory he had with him before

the world was. He was exalted in his human nature far above all principalities and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, whether in this world, or in that which is to come; and was put in possession of universal sovereignty, being constituted head over all things. Every creature in heaven and on the earth is commanded to honour him even as they honour the Father; and to render blessing, and glory, and power, to the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood. In looking to the effects of his abasement and suffering, both as they respect the glory of the divine character and government, and the salvation of a multitude which no man could number, he is filled with inconceivable satisfaction and delight: and this joy which was set before him, for which he endured the cross, and despised the shame, he is for ever to experience at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Thus, the highest possible reward is conferred on Christ in consideration of his humiliation. He, in his person as God and man in two distinct natures, is qualified to enjoy the honour and glory to which he is exalted. This boundless felicity is willingly conceded to him by God the Judge of all, by angels and archangels, by the spirits of the just made perfect, by every penitent and believing soul on earth, and by every holy being throughout the vast dominions of God. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Hence, it appears, that the objection of Socinians to the substitution of Christ, the injustice of one man's suffering personally, for another man's sin, is unfounded. There would be truth in the objection if the Righteous Judge, and he who was to suffer in room of the guilty, had not both agreed to this commutation: or, if he who bore the punishment had not been possessed of the most absolute independence, having had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. It might be true also, if he who suffered could not possibly be made partaker of any good afterward, that should balance, and overweigh all his suffering. But Christ was capable of receiving the most glorious reward: and for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. "The advantages derived to us from the meritorious sufferings of our Redeemer are so far from diminishing his reward, that the chief part of it results from them and is constituted by them."

There is, then, in this wonderful dispensation a combination of justice and of sovereignty. God is here presented to our view in the character of a just God and a Saviour:—a Righteous Ruler who must be just in all his ways; and a Sovereign Benefactor who exercises mercy as it pleases him.

CHAP. III.

THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST: OR HIS DEATH VIEWED AS THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

THERE are three distinct views given of the sufferings of Christ in scripture. They are presented to our consideration as the punishment of sin, and satisfaction rendered to divine justice; as the price of human redemption; and as a sacrifice by which reconciliation with God has been effected. I shall consider the death of Christ with respect to each of these views: and shall first direct our attention to it as a satisfaction rendered to divine justice.

The end of just punishment is, in general, either the amendment of the offender, or the good which is effected by it as an example on the minds of others. Under the law it was ordained that the presumptuous sinner should die; and the reason assigned is, that all the people may hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously. The design of the punishment was to deter others from acting in a similar manner. By this means the authority of the law was vindicated and maintained; and the government regarded with that deference which was essential to its stability and usefulness.

But with regard to God, the great, infinitely wise, holy, omniscient, and absolutely perfect Ruler of the world, to whom it belongs to issue laws for the regulation of all intelligent beings, the glory of his righteousness is the end designed by penal infliction. This implies, first, that God deals with sin according to its demerit;—punishes the sinner according to his desert: and, secondly, that it is due to himself as holy, just, and true, to proceed in this way against the violators of his law. These are the principles upon which a government infinitely righteous will be conducted. That they are the principles by which God regulates his moral government he himself has told us: "He will render to every man according to his deeds. For there is no respect of persons with God." But these considerations will more fully come under our review, when we shall notice at length the necessity of the atonement. At present we shall consider, what is meant by Christ's having rendered satisfaction to God for us.

I. What, then, are we precisely to understand by Christ's having rendered satisfaction by his sacrifice to God in our room? Though the word does not occur in the New Testament, and only twice in the Old, the thing intended by it is every where in Scripture ascribed to the death of Christ. The term satisfaction, is originally a forensic expression, applied properly to things, and signifying the rendering by the debtor the

full compensation due by him to the creditor. The application of the word to persons, or to what immediately regards the person, was a natural accommodation; and hence in Scripture sin is called a debt, for the forgiveness of which we are taught to pray. In this sense man as a sinner is a debtor to God the Supreme Judge, and is bound by the law to make satisfaction, or, in other words, to bear the penalty, which is death. But Christ having become his Surety, and having substituted himself in his room, bore this penalty in his stead, by offering himself a sacrifice unto God.

When we say that Christ gave satisfaction for us to God, and that the satisfaction so rendered to divine justice was necessary to the redemption of sinners, it is not meant that it had the effect of overcoming reluctance on the part of God to show mercy. On the contrary, so great was his willingness to extend mercy to mankind, that he pitied them in their low and lost estate, devised the method of recovery, provided his own Son to be the Saviour, and sent him into the world to accomplish the work of mediation. It was because he is rich in mercy, that so glorious a scheme originated with him;—a scheme which secures the salvation of man as well as the honour of God. The atonement for sin, made by the Redeemer, by its meeting every demand of law and justice, opened up a way for the free and righteous exercise of mercy, and by which God is reconciling the world unto himself.

Neither can it be allowed that the satisfaction which Christ rendered to divine justice, has in the slightest degree impaired the gracious freeness with which sin is pardoned. That satisfaction was in itself complete, —all that the justice of God required; and yet we obtain the remission of sins most freely, contrary to our own deserts, and according to the riches of God's grace. For is it not most manifest, that the salvation of the gospel of which the forgiveness of sins is only a part, is altogether free? Was it not God who, without any solicitation, and without any desert of ours, most freely provided the atonement of Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood? Did he not graciously accept of that atonement made by Christ in the room, and on the behalf of sinners? Does he not apply to them the benefits of the death of Christ; and impute to them, when they believe on him, the merit of his obedience? How then can the pardon of sin be more absolutely free? "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." The most free remission to sinners is compatible with the perfection of Christ's atonement. "Though in matters of pecuniary debt and credit, a full satisfaction from a surety excludes the idea of free pardon on the part of the creditor, yet it is otherwise in relation to crimes."*

* Fuller on Deism, p. 167.

Christ, then, by his satisfaction made a full compensation to the justice of God for the sins of the people, by bearing the punishment to which they were liable,—by enduring the wrath of God in their stead. While we believe that his divine dignity and worth, gave an infinite value to his sufferings,—a value which the sufferings of no mere creature could possess, does not the uniform testimony of Scripture, at the same time teach, that his sufferings were of the same nature, with the exception of his consciousness of innocence, and of his being beloved of the Father, with those which sinners deserve to endure? For what else was the curse of the law which he experienced in his own person, but the wrath of God against sin? What else is meant by his bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, but his suffering the punishment which was due to them? He was numbered with transgressors, and therefore he was treated according to the deserts of those in whose room he stood. In this way he was made sin for us; that is, charged with the guilt of it, and visited with its penal consequences. From the relationship in regard to us which he assumed, the justice of God required that he should bear the malediction due to us; that he should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. It required, that while we were allowed to escape, the punishment due to our iniquity should fall upon him.

But while the Scriptures thus uniformly teach, that

Christ suffered the wrath of God for the sins of men, they as clearly testify that he suffered it as a being who was personally and perfectly holy, and who was beloved, and delighted in, by the Father. He was not capable, therefore, of enduring the wrath of God in all respects as the reprobate, who have the sense of God's being angry personally with them, and who are conscious that they personally deserve it. He could only suffer divine wrath, first, by clear and impressive discoveries of its nature, and of its having been incurred by the sins of men: and this view of the infinite odiousness of sin, and of the dreadfulness of the punishment which it deserves, Christ had when he interposed between us and God. "As the clear view of sin in its hatefulness necessarily brought great suffering on the holy soul of Christ, so also did the view of its punishment. For both the evil of sin and the evil of punishment are infinite, and both infinitely disagreeable to Christ's nature; the former to his nature as God; the latter to his nature as man. Such is human nature, that a great, clear, and full idea of suffering, without some other pleasant and sweet idea to balance it, brings suffering."*

Secondly, Christ suffered the wrath of God by enduring its effects. Numerous were the instruments of his sufferings; but they are all to be regarded as shewing that God dealt with him as if he had been the

* Edwards' Works, vol. viii. p. 500.

object of his extreme displeasure. When he commanded the sword of his justice to awaken against him, restraints were removed from the evil passions of men, and from the power of Satan: obstacles were withdrawn, so that they might freely design, and fully execute, what their own malignant dispositions dictated. It was the voice of Him who never speaks but with effect, bidding, as it were, all nature be subservient to the vindication of his justice, in dealing with the Person who had engaged to answer for the guilt of sinful men, and who became bound to give the required satisfaction. The immediate agents in his sufferings, though they only acted in compliance with their own evil desires, were overruled for furthering God's eternal purpose; and they could have had no power at all against him, if it had not been given them from above.

Frequent and numerous, during the whole course of his life, were the sufferings of Jesus; so that the appellation by which the prophet had designated him was founded in truth, "The man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" as well as the metaphor employed to express the little estimation in which he was held, "A tender plant, and a root springing out of a dry ground, having neither form nor beauty that he should be desired." He endured the contradiction of sinners, the treachery of the betrayer, the unkindness of the disciples who had all forsaken him and fled, the indignities that were offered to him before the chief priests

and rulers, the stripes that were inflicted by the command of Pilate, the derision of Herod and of the soldiers, the shame of being numbered with transgressors, and the pain and ignominy of the cross. But these sufferings, though effects of the divine displeasure against sin, were trivial in comparison of what he endured from invisible enemies, and immediately from the hand of his Father.

To be satisfied of this, we have only to contemplate our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, where there existed no external instrument or cause of suffering. It was in that retirement that he began to be sore amazed, and very heavy,—that he was sorrowful even unto death,—that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears, unto him that was able to save him;—and that being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. He had submitted in silence to all that man had inflicted; but now that he came to tread the wine-press of the divine wrath alone, and was in close conflict at the same time with the powers of darkness, he gave unequivocal indications of the intensity of his suffering. He painfully felt the consequences of the wrath of God, in bearing the punishment of guilty men; and in deep agony reiterated the prayer, and with increasing earnestness, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" This prayer was so far answered that

an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him, probably by communicating physical energy to his frame, and, also, by reminding him of the glorious issue of his sufferings. But I apprehend that the comfortable expressions of God's favour and presence were not restored, and that the dejection and distress of mind resulting from this privation, and from other causes, continued during the whole of his last sufferings, while he was derided and buffeted in the palace of the High-Priest, accused before Pilate, and by that Governor scourged and condemned, while he was led away, faint and weary, bearing his cross to Calvary,—that the agony produced by this bereavement, and by his sense of divine wrath, was so intense as to force from him the exclamation, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" And that from this awful burden he was not relieved, till he had said, "It is finished, bowed his head, and dismissed his spirit."

What his agony was when God, as the offended Moral Governor and Judge, thus dealt with him, and inflicted upon him the punishment of our sins;—when the guilt, not merely of one soul, but of all the millions of his people, was imputed to him;—when the Father, in whose bosom he dwelt from eternity, hid his face from him; when he had the most vivid and overwhelming impressions of the necessary desert of the rebellion against God,—when the Sword of eternal justice fulfilled its commission in smiting him,—and when permission

was given to Satan and his hosts to assail him with temptations,—what his sufferings were when he endured all these expressions of divine anger, can be known only to himself. This was the hour and power of darkness, when the external gloom of the natural world but faintly indicated the absence of consolation within, —when he stood alone, marked out as the victim of that wrath under which mankind would have sunk and perished. Nor is there a more remarkable concomitant of these sufferings than this, that they were inflicted by the hand of a Father, acting in the character of Supreme Governor and Judge; that it pleased him to bruise him, and put him to grief; that he spared him not, but delivered him up to the death for us all. Though his soul delighted in him, and though his delight in him, had it been possible, would have been increased by the generous kindness of Jesus in undertaking the work of redemption, by his obedience unto the Father even unto death, by his pure devotedness to his glory, and by his unshaken trust in his promises, yet he spared him not, but laid upon him the iniquity of us all.—"By satisfaction, then, in a theological sense, we mean, such act, or acts as shall accomplish all the moral purposes which to the infinite wisdom of God appear fit and necessary under a system of rectoral holiness, and which otherwise must have been accomplished by the exercise of retributive justice upon transgressors in their own persons."

These observations are sufficient to explain what is meant by the satisfaction of Christ rendered to the justice of God on our behalf. Additional illustrations will of course be given in adducing the evidence to prove that such satisfaction was truly made to God by the Saviour in our room.

CHAP. IV.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST PROVED TO HAVE BEEN A SATISFACTION TO DIVINE JUSTICE, AND AN ATONEMENT FOR SIN.

THAT the death of Christ was a satisfaction for sin to the justice of God, is indeed the leading theme of divine Revelation; and the evidence, therefore, by which it is proved is varied, abundant, and conclusive. In addition to what was formerly advanced, I observe,

I. The truth and reality of the atonement may be inferred from the fact, that Christ, a Person truly divine, and perfectly innocent, actually suffered. When a person who is acknowledged to be holy, harmless, and undefiled, and who is therefore not liable to punishment, is treated, and that under the most righteous government, as though he were guilty, there must be good reasons to justify such extraordinary procedure. That these reasons were not merely to confirm his doctrine, to furnish an example, and to inform mankind of the benevolence of God, we formerly proved. His suffering could not have been intended for his own personal correction; for having been perfectly holy, he could not require amendment. The prophet who describes his deep sufferings, asserts his personal inno-

cence; for he declares that he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. How could he be punished for an example to others, when he himself had not offended? And yet, that the suffering of Christ was punishment in its most proper sense, is taught by the prophet when he says, that the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all,—that he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;—that he was wounded, bruised, chastised with stripes, oppressed, cut off, sacrificed, and his soul made an offering for sin. He must therefore have borne the punishment due to our sins, and in the bearing of which have given satisfaction for us to the offended justice of God.

II. The terms by which the sufferings of Christ are expressed in Scripture clearly prove that they were of a penal nature, and endured as the punishment of our sins. The phrases, dying for us, bearing our sins, suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, are significant of dying in our stead, and of enduring that which was due to us. When Judah entreated his brother Joseph to accept of him *instead* of Benjamin; he meant that he should become a bondman in room of his brother who should be set at liberty. When David wished that he might have died for Absalom his son, did he not intend by the expressions, the desire that his own life might have been substituted for his son's, and that Absalom might have lived? Is it not to substitution in this sense that the Apostle alludes, when he says,

that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us?" In like manner, when the Apostle asks the Corinthians, "Was Paul crucified for you?" he does not mean to inquire whether, on the supposition of his crucifixion he might not have thereby been instrumental in promoting their good, and the good of the church. For he had no doubt that his death by whatever means it might happen, would be overruled for advancing the glory of his Divine Master, and the furtherance of the gospel: "If I be offered upon the sacrifice, and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."* But the interrogation of the Apostle implies that Christ in his crucifixion was substituted *instead* of the church: and that in a sense in which neither Paul, nor any other creature, was capable of.

Agian: Christ is said to "bear our sins,"—"to bear our sins in his own body on the tree." But in Scripture a man is said to bear his iniquity, when he is made answerable for the guilt, and undergoes the punishment due to it. "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: that is, the son shall not be punished for the sin of the

* Philip. ii. 17; see also Col. i. 24.

father, nor the father for the sin of the son." The phrase, then, "to bear our sins," when applied to Christ, signifies that he in our stead underwent the punishment due to our sins; and that the whole penalty of the violated law of God was actually inflicted on him. Whatever was included in the curse of the law was due to our transgressions; but Christ took all this upon himself; for he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. In bearing the wrath of God, which is what the curse of the law denotes, he experienced the evils comprehended in that death which had been denounced against sinners,—fear, agony, dereliction of the Father's gracious presence, great sorrow, heaviness, and inexpressible distress.

Further; it is said, that God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all:—words which clearly teach us that the sufferings of Christ were the effect of the Father's special appointment; and that having substituted him in our room, he inflicted upon him the punishment due to our deserts. He dealt with him as his Son, indeed, but as his Son in the character of the Friend and Surety of sinners, who had undertaken to pay their debt, and to render satisfaction for their trespasses. The fact that God spared not his own Son from deep and unparalleled sufferings, is evidence that these sufferings were penal, and formed the punishment for our sins. For might we not sup-

pose, that the God of infinite compassion, who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, would, had it been possible otherwise to reconcile the salvation of mankind with the salvation of sinners, have preserved his own Son from the shame and pain, which he unquestionably suffered? What mysterious severity in Him whose tender mercies are over all his works, whose love surpasseth in tenderness that which a woman bears to her sucking child, and who even hears the ravens when they cry, not to withhold his own Son from the most agonizing sorrows, and not to spare him in his deep distress! The Apostle assigns the reason when he says, that he delivered him up for us all: his justice, therefore, exacted from him the satisfaction which was due from all; and inflicted on him the punishment which we all had merited. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."

When the Apostle, therefore, declares that God spared not his own Son, there is a meaning in his expressions far beyond what relates to the sufferings which men and fallen angels were instrumental in inflicting. The imputation of our sins to the substitute of sinners, and the punishment consequent upon such imputation, was the doing of God: and, accordingly, in dealing with him as our representative, God

visited him with suffering which no created power could inflict,—the withdrawment of the sensible consolations of his gracious presence. We are altogether incapable of forming an adequate judgment of the magnitude of this token of the divine displeasure.

In accordance with these views, the Apostle Paul teaches us, that Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God:—and that Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Sacrifice in every case had such a connexion with him by whom it was offered, that it was regarded as substituted in his room; and forcibly to denote this relation, it was ordained under the law that the offerer should lay his hand upon the head of the beast, and thus at once consecrate it to God, and own the translation of his guilt from himself to the Victim, which was put in his place to undergo the punishment deserved by him. In like manner, Christ the true sacrifice had such a relation to us, that he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God; the imputation of our sin being the meritorious cause of his sufferings. He died in our stead, that we might live by his death. He gave, by the sacrifice of himself, that perfect satisfaction to divine justice, which the sacrifices under the law were incapable of rendering. They answered the important purpose of removing uncleanness by a figurative atonement. How much more, argues the Apostle, shall the blood of Christ

who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God! Here, the superiority, the completeness, the efficacy, and the fruits of the atonement of Christ are brought into view; and we are explicitly told that he did really and effectually by his expiatory sufferings what they only did figuratively and emblematically.

The Apostle most emphatically teaches the same doctrine in the following passage, in which he makes the imputation of guilt, and the rendering of satisfaction to God as the consequence, the characteristic of Christ's first coming, and that which distinguishes it from the second. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."* According to this language, the very end of Christ's appearance was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. How did he accomplish this end but by offering himself in his sufferings to God as an atonement for it, by undergoing in himself the penalty due to it? He was at once the priest who presented the oblation, and the sacrifice that was offered: and in this his design was to

* Heb. ix. 26—28.

bear the sin of many: to sustain in himself its penal effects, so that sinful men might escape from them. As the scape-goat, over which the sins of the children of Israel were confessed, typically carried them away into the wilderness, so Christ when he bore our sins, removed their guilt, and consequently the punishment to which that guilt rendered liable,—he took it away by his most perfect atonement. He finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness: he appeased that wrath by which sinners would have been consumed; and rendered it consistent with the honours of his justice and moral government, for the God of Holiness to return as the God of peace to his disobedient children. He took away the guilt of sin, by giving full satisfaction to divine justice on account of it; so that the righteousness of God unites with his mercy, in offering pardon and reconciliation to a lost world.

III. That Christ in his sufferings bore the wrath of God due to our sins, and thereby made atonement to divine justice for them, is evident from the nature of his sufferings. I shall only at present make a few observations illustrative and corroborative of this truth.

The nature of Christ's sufferings as penal, and therefore ignominious and painful, is referred to by the Apostle when he says, that "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered

without the gate :"* words which form an inference from what he had affirmed in the preceding verses, concerning the sacrifice for sin on the great day of atonement. The blood of the animals slain on that day was carried by the high-priest within the veil, where, in obedience to the divine appointment, he sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and thus made atonement for the transgressions of Israel. But the bodies of those beasts whose blood was thus brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest, were burned without the camp: as things under the curse, they were devoted to destruction. They were designed, in these respects, to prefigure what he was to do and to suffer who was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law :—and to present to the view of the people, by lively emblematical representation, the great and fundamental doctrine of divine Revelation, that atonement was to be made for the sins of man only, by the substitution and suffering of a Being of innocence and of excellence in room of the guilty.

The penal nature of the sufferings of Christ, is forcibly intimated by the circumstance mentioned by the Apostle, that he suffered without the gate. He was condemned to be crucified, went forth out of the city as a malefactor, was numbered with transgressors, and showed by the death which he died, that he bore the

* Heb. xiii. 12.

curse. He was by violence cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. His sufferings and death being the effects of God's avenging justice, it was necessary that he should die by the shedding of his blood. Hence, he is said, agreeably to this view, to have been slain, to have been killed, put to death, wounded, bruised, and cut off. It was required for the same reason that his death should have been ignominious; ignominy being included in the malediction, or the suffering of God's wrath incurred by transgression. Was not this evil inflicted in the affecting scene that followed the betraying of Jesus, and especially in the lingering and shameful death of the cross? To render the ignominy complete, he was derided in his priestly, prophetical, and regal offices; scourged, as if he had been ranked with the most degraded of mankind, and doomed to bear his cross without the gate. Devoted as he was to bear the curse, he endured excruciating suffering in his body, the senses of which were agonized with pain; his head being crowned with thorns; his hands, feet, and side, pierced with nails and a spear.

It is evident, however, that he suffered chiefly in his soul, the anguish and distress of which were unutterable, under a sense of God's wrath, and in the absence of sensible comfort. If the law denounced death as the penalty of transgression, he bore this penalty, for he died for our sins: if it had pronounced

a curse on the sinner, was not he made a curse for us: if it forewarned of the loss of God's favour as the inevitable consequence of violating the divine command, had not he to deplore the absence of his Father's countenance in the memorable words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He suffered also in his character and reputation: for though the Holy One of God, he was charged with blasphemy, represented as seditious, mocked as an impostor, condemned as a malefactor, and crucified between two thieves. The Apostle gives the explanation of this mystery when he says, that "Christ suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us unto God:"—that he "made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

CHAP. V.

ON THE ATONEMENT CONSIDERED AS THE RANSOM PRICE OF HUMAN REDEMPTION.

REDEMPTION usually signifies the deliverance of persons from bondage by the payment of a ransom price to him by whose power and authority they are detained. To Christ is ascribed in Scripture the redemption of mankind from the captivity of sin and Satan, and from the condemnation of the law of God. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many: (λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.) Ye are bought with a price. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

The blood of Christ, or his death, is thus represented as having the same place as a ransom-price in the redemption of which he has become the author, which silver and gold occupies, as the procuring cause, in

the deliverance of captives from temporal bondage. As it is by silver and gold paid to him by whom captives are detained, that they are restored to liberty; so is it by the blood of Christ shed in expiation of our offences, that we are redeemed from thraldom and misery.

The terms which have thus been appropriated to denote the deliverance of man from a state of sin were originally borrowed, partly, from the pecuniary transaction of the payment of a debt, the effect of which was the release of the imprisoned debtor; and partly, from the practice connected with ancient warfare, of buying back the life and liberty of a captive by a ransom price. What language could more fitly describe the debt which sinful man has incurred, and is ever incurring, by the violation of the numerous obligations which he owes to God? The obligation to obedience in its full extent remains unalterable; while the liability to punishment in consequence of continued disobedience necessarily attaches to the sinner, and from which he cannot by any power of his own exonerate himself. Mankind therefore were in a helpless condition,—a condition which is aptly compared "to the state of a captive detained by his enemy, or a debtor in prison, or a convicted criminal chained in his condemned cell."

These views will be fully elucidated in the course of the following observations on the Redemption effected by Christ. This redemption we ought always to remember, is peculiar, and possesses properties with

which there is nothing to compare in the transactions of men.

I. The ransom price, in this case, was provided by Him to whom it was paid. God is represented in the Old Testament as giving an equivalent for his ancient people when accomplishing their deliverance from Egyptian or from Babylonish captivity. "I am Jehovah, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia, and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore I will give men in thy stead, and nations instead of thy life."* It was God who procured the price of our redemption from spiritual bondage and misery, by delivering up his Son a ransom for the sins of men. The bestowment of this gift of transcendent value, shews that it was with that God who is rich in mercy our deliverance from a mighty and overwhelming ruin originated.

II. The design of the redemption thus effected was to restore the captives to the divine favour. Before conversion and reconciliation to God, all men are alienated from him, and are by nature the children of wrath.† In accordance with this representation it is said of God, that he is angry with the wicked, and that his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men: expressions which, whatever else they may signify, certainly denote, that the nature

* Isa. xliii. 3, 4. † Eph. ii. 1—4.

of God is opposed to all sin, and that it is his immutable determination to punish it. While exposed to this righteous judgment of God, mankind are described as being at a distance from him, as having no hope, and without God in the world. The effect of the redemption in Christ Jesus is, that they who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ: he having redeemed them from the curse of the law, the favour of God, and all the blessings included in it, may be freely extended to them. Though he was angry with them, his anger by the propitiating sacrifice of his Son, is turned away from them; as the consequence, their captivity is terminated, and they are constituted the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

III. The redemption in Christ Jesus differs from redemption among men in this, that while in the latter the riches of the person to whom the ransom price is paid is thereby increased, the design of the former is only to maintain the rights and honours of God's moral government. It is obvious that God cannot possibly be made greater, or wiser, or happier than he essentially is; being in himself the Sovereign Lord, and proprietor of all things. The design of the sacrifice of Christ, therefore, viewed in the light of a ransom price, was to exhibit the justice and government of God in the most glorious character in the remission of sin, and in the deliverance of sinners. It was to purchase us off, at the expense of his own life, from the necessary con-

sequences of transgression, and thus to make us free from condemnation. "Thou wast slain, (the word commonly used to denote the slaying of sacrifices,) and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

IV. Redemption by power in this case immediately follows redemption by price. The bearing of the curse of the law, or the purchasing of us from its consequences by the price of the Redeemer's blood, was of course to be accompanied with the subjugation of those enemies by which we are held captive. These, in righteous judgment, were allowed to exercise an evil influence upon mankind, and to retain them in degrading and miserable thraldom. We learn from Scripture that there were angels who revolted from God, and who by rebellion fell from their first estate; that ever since the era of their apostasy they have been animated by a principle of enmity against the blessed God; that they have been permitted to employ themselves in attempting to thwart the beneficent purposes of his government; that as soon as man was formed they contemplated his destruction, and entered on the enterprise which succeeded in alienating him from the obedience of his Creator. Though we are not informed what is the number of these fallen spirits, we easily gather from the language which alludes to them, that they are all malignant and powerful; that they have a leader

who is pre-eminent in power and in malignity; and that this leader and his hosts, after they had seduced mankind into disobedience, held them in willing bondage. The fatal success of their measures appears from the firmness with which their empire was established, the readiness every where shewn to forget God, to change his truth into a lie, and to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

But the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil; that he might subvert his kingdom, and liberate sinful men from his usurped dominion:—that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. This gracious design he accomplished by ransoming them from the penalties of the law; and thus procuring to himself the right of delivering them from the power of sin and Satan. He redeemed them by a price when he paid the debt due by them to divine justice,—blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and taking it out of the way, he nailed it to his cross: he rescued them by the strength of his arm from the dominion of their enemies; having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The cancelling of the bond is prior to the subjugation of our enemies; but the latter event is a natural consequence of the former.

That the redemption by Christ is real, and that it was effected by the ransom price of his blood, appear,

I. From the light in which sin is represented in Scripture. It is spoken of as a debt, for the forgiveness of which we are by our Lord to pray. Under this notion, we are represented as liable to imprisonment for the non-payment of that which we owe to the Judge of all: "Agree quickly with thine adversary whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the utmost farthing."* But debt in its literal signification denotes that portion of property which one person owes to another: and by a very natural use of the expression is applied to the non-fulfilment of our moral obligations. By our disobedience we incur the penalty of the law of God, expose ourselves to the consequences of rebellion against our Maker, and are as incapable of making atonement to offended justice, as an insolvent debtor who has lost or wasted goods to a large amount is to render full payment to his creditors.—The natural obligations under which we are laid to love the Lord our God supremely, and to serve him perfectly, we have violated: we have therefore criminally failed in giving to God that which he claims, and which is due

* Matth. v. 24—26.

by us to him; and the extent of this failure is a debt of such magnitude as could only be paid by him who gave his life a ransom for us. In other words, the punishment merited by our guilt could only be borne by him who is mighty to save; and the satisfaction due to the law and justice of God could only be rendered by him who gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. When we were captives to the justice of God by reason of sin; and were under the power of our spiritual enemies, Christ by his blood paid the price of our redemption, and procured our deliverance.

II. The redemption thus wrought out by Christ, and purchased by his death, is not metaphorical, but real. It is alleged by those who unhappily deny the reality of the Saviour's atonement, that as God is frequently said in the Old Testament to redeem his people, which redemption he accomplished for them without a ransom; therefore the redemption by Christ is metaphorical, a mere deliverance, without the intervention of any price. To this weak objection the proper reply is, that because the word redemption is used sometimes in scripture to denote deliverance merely, in cases where it was impossible that a ransom should be paid, it does not therefore follow that the expression is to be so understood when it is applied to Christ the Mediator between God and man, of whom it is affirmed that he bought us with a

price. "It is a safe rule of interpreting Scripture, that in places mentioning the love and grace of God to us, the words are to be taken in their utmost significancy. It is a thing most unworthy a good and wise man, to set out his kindness and benefits with great swelling words, of mighty weight and importance, which when the thing signified by them comes to be considered, must be interpreted by way of diminution and lessening. Much less can it be once imagined, that God has expressed his love and kindness, and the fruits of it to us, in great and weighty words, that in their ordinary use and significancy contain a great deal more than really he hath done."*

That the redemption by Christ must be understood in its usual signification, as denoting that which delivers from bondage or captivity by the intervention of a price, appears from the words by which the sacred writers speak of it;—λύτρον, ἀπολύτρον, ἀντίλυτρον. Matth. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; 1 Tim. ii. 6. These words, especially the last, signify the payment of such a price as is a just compensation in lieu of something done or granted by him to whom it is paid. They properly denote an equivalent rendered for the deliverance of captives from bondage;—a price paid for loosing them from their bonds, and setting them at liberty. Thus Josephus says, Ant. lib. xiv. cap. 14. § i. "Herod not knowing what had happened to his brother, hastened to

* Owen on the Satisf. of Christ, vol. ix. p. 144.

redeem him from the enemy, and was willing to pay for his ransom, λύτρον ὑπερ αυτου, a sum of money to the amount of three hundred talents." When, therefore, it is affirmed by our Lord that he came to give his life a ransom for many; and when in innumerable passages we are taught that he substituted himself in room of sinners and died in their stead, are we not bound to believe on the authority of God that the redemption by Christ was effected by a ransom paid for the delivery of men from the bondage of sin and death? It is a redemption which was accomplished, not by simple manumission, as may take place in the case of slaves who are gratuitously restored to liberty by their master; nor by mere power, by which captives are sometimes rescued from the hands of their enemy; but by the just satisfaction which was rendered to God by our Surety who paid the debt for us. This redemption with respect to us is altogether gratuitous: for by grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; and it is by power in regard to Satan, from whose tyranny we are delivered by the triumph of Christ; but in respect to God, the Righteous Judge, it has been accomplished by a ransom price, even the life of the Redeemer. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." These views will be confirmed by adverting,

III. To the cause of that bondage in which man-

kind are held, and from which Christ came to deliver. Here, we must remember that the actual condition of mankind is sinful and wretched. "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.—For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* It is of infinite importance to be convinced of the truth of this statement in regard to ourselves; and thus to have that humbleness of mind which is requisite to appreciate the inestimable value of that remedy which God has provided.

It is against God that we have sinned: we have been unfaithful to the trust which he committed to us: we have rebelled against him whom we are bound supremely to obey; and we stand indebted to him for ten thousand talents. We have therefore fallen under the sentence of his law, which is condemnation from God, the wrath with which sinners are punished; and are absolutely shut up by his authority as captives and prisoners of hope. Accordingly, the work of Christ is described as consisting in bringing the prisoners out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.—"As for thee also by the blood of the covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water.—Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

* Rom. iii. 19—21.

But thus saith the Lord, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: and I will save thy children: and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."*

Mankind are detained in captivity legally and judicially by the authority of God. The sentence of his law has gone forth against them, which though in mercy it has been suspended, has not been recalled. His wrath abideth on them, and they are obnoxious to all its fearful consequences. The unimpeachable veracity of Him who had said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," was pledged for the fulfilment of his word;—the holiness that shines pure as the light inaccessible in which Jehovah dwells, barred the approach of the sinner to his God;—and his justice, which constitutes the sceptre of his kingdom, a sceptre of righteousness, formed the flaming sword which turned every way to guard the tree of life. It was while men were in this state of bondage, that the Son of the Highest undertook to redeem them by the ransom price of his own most precious blood. With a generosity that exceeds our conceptions, he placed himself in room of the captives, became bound as their Sponsor to pay their whole debt, gave the compensation, by his perfect obedience, and atoning sufferings, which the law and justice of God demanded, and actually redeemed from

* Isa. xlix. 24—26.

the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. The underived dignity and glory of the Substitute of sinners; his voluntarily giving himself for the sins of a fallen world a sacrifice to God; his stooping so low as to humble himself even in the form of a servant, and in the nature of man, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;—impressively show the demerit of sin, and the inflexibility of the justice of God; and demonstrate, that as our captivity is a reality, so also is the redemption by which we are made free. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Is it God, against whom they have sinned, who as the Righteous Judge, pronounces sentence of condemnation on the violators of his law, and inflicts the penalty of disobedience? But it is God who justifies, who frees them from liability to punishment, and bestows on them the title to eternal life; and who does so, because "it is Christ that died," and who thus ransomed them by his blood.

The natural bondage of mankind, in consequence of their liability to the wrath of God, is accompanied by circumstances by which the nature of man is spiritually and practically enslaved. To some of these I have already adverted. Satan has been permitted to avail himself of the condition of men in regard to the law of God, by assuming dominion over them, and leading them captive at his will. Full deliverance from his tyranny is included in the redemption of

Christ, and follows as a necessary consequence from his purchasing them by his blood. "Who hath delivered us," says the Apostle, "from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.—"You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* Though Satan thus exercised a darkening and degrading influence over mankind, it was by the authority of God alone they were detained captives: the evil One being merely the allowed instrument of aggravating the misery of their bondage, the subversion of his usurped dominion followed of course from the payment of the debt due to the law and justice of God.

But sin itself has an enslaving power. Fatal experience proves that its tendency is to blind the mind, to harden the heart, to produce a disinclination to the will of God, and a moral incapacity to practise it. That mankind are naturally under the practical and enslaving power of sin is too obvious to require proof.

* Col. i. 13; Eph. ii. 1—4.

Are not they subject to its control in whom it dwells without opposition, in whose heart it abides as a welcome guest, and who yield willing obedience to it in the desires of the flesh and of the mind? Nor even though it should be opposed in some cases feebly and ineffectually, can it with truth be said, that there is an exemption from its dominion: for who is so hardened in sin as not to form some resolutions of amendment, and not to feel concerned as to its consequences?

But Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity: first, from its guilt, so that it should have no more condemning power over us. This accordingly is the immediate result of union to him who gave satisfaction to the justice of God by bearing the penalty in our room, who blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, and that was contrary to us, and who took it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. Hence, the promises of forgiveness which on this ground are addressed to all who believe on the Redeemer. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

The redemption by Christ secures deliverance also from the practical power of sin: not immediately by the blood of Jesus, but consequentially, as a captive is delivered from his fetters upon the payment of his

ransom. Christ by paying our debt to divine justice, and by reconciling us to God, has procured the gift of the Spirit to deliver us from the pollution and dominion of iniquity. He redeemed us from the curse of the law, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Concerning all who are vitally united to him it is affirmed, that sin shall not have the dominion over them. They are not, indeed, while in this mortal state, exempted from its assaults, or, from the infirmities which it has entailed: though in an enfeebled vanquished state, it still dwells in them, and gives them occasion daily to say in their supplications, who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults: keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. But they do not yield obedience unto sin, nor suffer it to assume its former sway over them. Their principles and character are changed, as well as their condition. Every hinderance to the effusion of the Holy Spirit is removed by the redemption of Christ, and by the imputation of his righteousness to them. The obstacles which prevented this divine communication no longer exist in regard to them; the sins which like a thick cloud intervened between them and the light of God's countenance, are forgiven and forgotten; and they have therefore uninterrupted access to the fountain of renovating and sanctifying grace, in consequence of which

they are enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

IV. As it was by the authority of God, that mankind were legally and judicially detained as captives, so it was to God that the price of their redemption was paid. A writer* who has opposed the doctrine of the atonement acknowledges, that "nothing is wanting in this deliverance, that it might wholly answer a true redemption, but only that he who detained the captive should receive the price. For on that account chiefly," says he, "is our deliverance not a true, but a metaphorical redemption, because in it there is none that should receive the price. For if that which is in the place of a price be received by him who delivers the captives, then, not a metaphorical, but a true price had intervened, and thereupon our redemption had been proper. I understand the proper use of the word to redeem, to be, when a true price is given; true price I call not only money, but whatever is given to him, that delivers the captive, to satisfy him, although many things in the redemption be metaphorical."

Now, the Saviour really did pay the price of our redemption unto God. To constitute a ransom, it is not necessary that silver or gold should be rendered; but that it be such a valuable compensation as satisfies him who detains the captives, and in consideration of

* Socinus: De Servat. Lib. i. cap. 2.

which he consents to their release. If, for example, a dear relative were in captivity, and that he who held him in bondage required as the condition of his delivery, that his brother should undertake a difficult and hazardous warfare on his account; and that he performed the perilous task demanded of him; he would in that case properly ransom his brother, though he had paid no money for his redemption. In like manner, Christ paid a ransom to God for us, when for our delivery from the fearful penalty of transgression—from the wrath to come, he did all, and underwent all, which was requisite, in God's estimation, to constitute an adequate atonement. He who in love appointed this all-sufficient propitiation, in justice required it, and accepted of it. It was the stipulated condition of the release of the captives; and it was performed readily and effectually by the Redeemer. In comparison of the ransom which he thus paid to God, how poor and paltry are the most costly gifts that man has ever bestowed, or, the most arduous services that man has ever discharged, for the deliverance of his fellow creatures! He with matchless condescension veiled his eternal glory, compassionated our miseries, and undertook the mighty work of redeeming mercy. It was love that spake when he interposed for our help, and said, "Deliver from going down to the pit; for I will become the ransom." He suffered without the gate the wrath of God due

to sin,—he endured the cross, despised the shame, and persevered in rendering the stipulated ransom price till he authoritatively and triumphantly announced that the redemption of man was finished. Thus, the blood of Christ, shed as an atonement for our sins, was that on account of which God grants us deliverance from the punishment of iniquity. We are therefore said to have redemption through his blood:—to be washed from our sins in his blood:—and to be redeemed unto God by his blood. I observe,

V. That the reality of Christ's redemption is confirmed by the terms in which he speaks of himself and of his office; and also by the names by which the sacred writers frequently describe him. It is remarkable that the prophets, in describing the Messiah, speak of him very often in the character of a Redeemer. This appellation could not be applied to him in a secondary and metaphorical acceptation in allusion to the redemption from Egypt; because the redemption from Egypt, and the other deliverances which were wrought for the people of God, were employed figuratively to represent the great and perfect work of redeeming mercy. As these events were typical of the greatest of all events that ever happened in the world; so, temporal deliverers obscurely and imperfectly shadowed forth, the mighty Deliverer who was to ransom his people with his blood.

When he entered on his ministry, he thus appro-

priated to himself the language of ancient prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." Here mankind are represented as in a miserable and distressed condition; as captives, and in prison: and the Saviour speaks of himself as invested with the character of a Deliverer, and authorized to announce redemption from this spiritual bondage. He himself informs us that in order to procure this redemption, it was necessary to give his life a ransom for many; and to lay down his life in obedience to the will of his Father. His Apostles tell us, that before God exalted Him with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins, he had been delivered for our offences; had been made sin for us, though he knew no sin; had borne our sins in his own body on the tree; had suffered for sins, the just for the unjust; and had redeemed us from the curse of the law, by his having been made a curse for us.

This explains the manner in which our Lord became a Redeemer, and Saviour; and shews the reality and infinite greatness of that redemption which

he proclaims. The deliverance offered was effected by the most costly price:—a price which bespeaks at once the miserable condition of those for whom redemption was purchased, the fearful demerit of sin, the perfect purity and justice of God's character and moral government, and the value and completeness of the liberty which is thus procured. It is, at the same time, most certain, that without some conviction of the reality of those evils from which it is intended to deliver us, we shall remain void of any just sense of the infinite importance of the designs to be attained by the transcendent worth of that ransom by which the Lord bought his people.

VI. The redemption of mankind is expressly ascribed to the death of Christ. In a passage of Scripture to which I have repeatedly referred (Heb. ii. 14, 15), it is declared that he assumed our nature, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. It is said of those whom the Saviour came to redeem, that they were subject to death, the wages of sin; that their exposure to this great evil was productive of painful fear; and that by means of this painful feeling, they were all their lifetime in a state of bondage. In delivering them from this condition by his death, he destroyed him that had the power of death.

But in what way had the devil power over death? He indeed first introduced it into the world, by the seduction of man from his allegiance to God: and we may suppose that he continues to exert his influence by aggravating its horror. But I conceive that the true meaning is, that he has certain dominion over that future misery,—that state of exclusion from God and from happiness, to which the term death in this passage peculiarly refers; "the privation of life in its best sense, a sense often occurring in Scripture, that of a holy and happy existence; a condition to which the awful term may well be applied in its most aggravated and terrible capacity of signification. This acceptation of the word was in use among the ancient Jews, and it is exemplified in the New Testament.* On the admission of this interpretation, it is easy to see the propriety of the expression which attributes to the apostate and malignant Spirit a dominion over the state of final perdition. It plainly imports his insatiable desire of the ruin of souls; his hunting for victims 'as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,' tempting to sin in order to drag them down to the eternal death; his pre-eminence in guilt, and in the misery which grows from guilt; his superior title to that unutterable and everlasting punishment which is 'prepared for the devil and his angels.' This view

* John viii. 51; xi. 26; Rom. vi. 23; Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 8.

also gives a rational conception of the fear and bondage, which cannot but press upon the minds of those who entertain serious reflections on the evil and demerit of sin, but who have no adequate knowledge of the way of pardon and deliverance; and it furnishes an intelligible and most consolatory understanding of this great end of the All-gracious Redeemer's sufferings and death, namely, to depose the usurper, and deliver his despairing captives."*

This figurative acceptation of the term death is more suitable and applicable, also, to the dying of our Lord for the redemption of men. "The manifest design of the passage appears to me to require, that the death, which is here stated to have been the means of accomplishing the stupendous purposes of eternal mercy, should be understood, not of the mere physical death of the Lord Jesus, but of the whole comprehension of his sufferings for the redemption of the world. The fact of natural death, the mere ceasing to live, was the smallest part of those sufferings: it was their termination and relief. The sorrow which he endured, ineffably transcended all corporal agony. It was death in the soul. Our moral feelings sin has made slow and torpid; so that we can form none but very faint conceptions of the load of distress and horror which pressed on that soul whose unsullied innocence and perfection of sensibility were without an

* Smith's Scrip. Test. vol. ii. p. 382.

equal in all human nature.—The total of those sufferings it seems proper to comprehend in the death, by which he spoiled the destroyer and delivered the captives."*

Those who allege that our Lord destroyed him that had the power of death, and relieved his people from the fear of it, by the example which he afforded in meekly submitting to death himself, do not surely consider that the death of our Lord, viewed in this light, does not seem calculated to answer the purpose here attributed to it. For " many of the children of men, sincere, though weak and sinful servants of Jesus, have met death, in outward forms more appalling than the death of the cross, with triumphant joy. Such deaths might be appealed to as examples to take away the fear of dying. But the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was not of this kind. It was an example, not of a happy state of mind in the approaches of dissolution, but of one mysteriously and awfully the reverse. It was, therefore, much more calculated to inspire the hearts of guilty mortals with dismay, than, considered as an example, to emancipate them from the terrors of death. Our Lord's own reasoning would bear a most alarming application to aggravate our fears: " If they do these things in the green tree, what shall take place in the dry?"—The deliverance, therefore, which the Apostle attributes to the death of Christ, as the

* Smith's Scrip. Test. vol. ii. p. 383.

procuring cause, "is evinced to have been a deliverance, not from the apprehension of physical death, but from the sad forebodings of conscience, the condemnation of God's righteous tribunal, the inevitable retribution of sin, the second death." By the atoning sacrifice of himself to God, he expiated the guilt of his people, saved them from the tyranny of their spiritual enemies, from the dominion of sin, and from its future and fearful consequences.

CHAP. VI.

ON THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST AS IT PROCURED RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.

A THIRD view of the death of Christ given in Scripture is that of a sacrifice by which our reconciliation with God has been effected. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. He is our peace who hath reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross."*

I shall not here enter on the proof of the reality of Christ's sacrifice. That follows from what has already been advanced concerning the death of Christ as a satisfaction to divine justice, and as the price of our redemption. It is expressly affirmed in Scripture; and the design of a great part of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to prove its superiority and infinite value. The assertion of the Apostle, that Christ hath given himself

* Texts describing Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin. Is. liii. 5—8; Matth. xx. 28; xxvi. 28; Mark x. 45; Acts viii. 32, 33; Rom. iii. 24, 25; iv. 25; v. 6—10; 1 Cor. v. vii; xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. i. 3; ii. 17; ix. 12—28; x. 10—18; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 1 John iv. 10; Rev. v. 9—12; xiii. 8.

for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, must be regarded as decisive on this subject by all who are disposed to submit to the authority of the Oracles of God.

The reconciliation accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ was typically and ceremonially effected by the sacrifices of the law. They attained this end by the atonement which they made for sin. But the Apostle has shewn (Heb. x. 1—4) that the legal sacrifices were altogether insufficient to make a real atonement to divine justice, and that the frequency of their repetition amply proved their utter insufficiency. They were from their inferior nature incapable of affording an adequate expression of the evil of sin, of God's abhorrence of it, and his justice in its punishment. It was not, therefore, possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Hence the necessity of a sacrifice of infinite value having been substituted in their room, which could make that atonement really which they only accomplished figuratively and ceremonially. "Wherefore when he (Christ) cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me: In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.—By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never

take away sins: but this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Here we are taught, that Christ, like the priests under the law, offered for sin; that whereas they exercised their ministry by a frequent repetition of the same sacrifices, he offered up himself a sacrifice but once; that theirs, notwithstanding of their constancy, multiplication, and cost, had no efficacy for the expiation of iniquity; but that his, having been presented for that end, attained the design for which it was offered;—and that he presented his one sacrifice for sin while he was upon earth, before he sat down in glory and majesty on the right hand of God.

The effects of this sacrifice of Christ made by the once offering up of himself are the removal of the divine wrath, and our reconciliation with God. Peace was effected by the atoning blood of the Cross; and on this ground the gospel announces that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

Reconciliation in every case is a renewal of former friendship between persons at variance. This friendship originally existed between man and his Maker, when every affection of his heart was right with God, and when the Creator looked with complacency on him, as formed in his own image. But sin interrupted this communion and harmony, and made a breach on the peace between God and mankind. He in righteous

judgment ejected them from paradise, withdrew his peculiar favour and gracious presence, and gave numerous and unequivocal proofs of his displeasure. Their iniquities separated between them and their God, and their sins caused him to hide his face from them. "They rebelled against him, therefore he was turned to be their enemy and fought against them." On this ground they are said to be in their natural condition the children of wrath, and to have the wrath of God abiding on them. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." "God is angry with the wicked every day." This alienation, on the part of God, arises from the infinite purity and righteousness of his nature, in consequence of which he cannot look upon iniquity, nor continue his friendship to those who are under the guilt and dominion of sin. It is therefore his will and determination that the violation of his law should be punished,—a determination which he has expressed in the threatenings of his word, and by the actual procedure of his providence,—and for the accomplishment of which his veracity, wisdom, and power are pledged.

I need not say that man, who was the party offending, is alienated from God; that he has departed from him as his chief good, and seeks his happiness in forgetting the God that made him. He dislikes the purity of his character, the requirements of his law, and the exercise of his authority. He is, besides, under the malediction of God's law from which he could not be delivered

but by such a ransom as the Supreme Sovereign and Ruler of the universe should prescribe, or by means obviously impossible, a reversing of the enactments of eternal truth and rectitude. Hence the terms in which the Apostle addresses the converts to Christianity at Colosse; "You, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight."*

To make reconciliation,—to effect a full and mutual renewal of love and friendship, it was necessary that the anger of God should be appeased, and his wrath turned away; that the enmity of man should be subdued, and that he should be brought into voluntary obedience. In infinite love and mercy God himself provided suitable means for accomplishing these purposes. As the Supreme Moral Governor, against whom the offence had been committed, his consent was absolutely necessary before the most adequate plan could be available. But the wonderful scheme had its origin with himself; it was the result of his wisdom and compassion;—he appointed his own Son to be Mediator, solemnly consecrated him to his office, prescribed to him the work which he should finish; and from him received such satisfaction for the wrongs which had been done as to render it becoming the character of the Sovereign

* Colos. i. 21, 22.

Lord and Ruler to offer a renewal of his friendship to sinful men. By the propitiation of his blood, atonement has been made, the righteousness of God declared, and God is through Christ proclaiming peace and good-will to all mankind. It was in this way that when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

The Divine Person whom God thus appointed as the reconciler was in every way qualified for his work, and capable of bringing it to a happy issue. In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He bore the punishment due to us, and by his atonement made full expiation for iniquity. He who alone knows what is due to his character and government, has declared that this is a sufficient vindication of his justice, that his anger is turned away, that he will be for ever merciful and gracious to all who will receive the proffered reconciliation; and he has commanded his servants to go into all the world with these glad tidings, to persuade men to acquaint themselves with God, and to be at peace. A foundation has been laid for a full and lasting reconciliation by the blood of Christ, by the complete satisfaction which it has rendered unto God, and the provision it has made for the justification and sanctification of men.

To this view of the reconciliation it has been stated

by way of objection, that if such was the love of God to mankind, that he himself provided a Saviour, how can it be supposed that his wrath was appeased and his anger turned away by an atonement? If the mission and death of Christ were the greatest possible proofs of the compassion of God, how could they be necessary to avert his displeasure? Since God's love was the cause of sending Christ, he must needs before that have laid aside his anger; for otherwise, would he not love us, and love us not, at the same time? Those who advance this superficial objection farther allege, that the term reconciliation denotes, not the turning away of the divine wrath from us by an atonement, but our conversion to God, because we never read in Scripture of God's being reconciled to us, or of Christ's having reconciled God to us, but only of our being reconciled to God by Christ; and of God's reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

In answering these seeming objections to the scripture doctrine of reconciliation by the sacrifice of Christ, I remark,

I. That we gratefully admit, what the scriptures so fully set forth, that the mercy of God is the origin of human redemption; and that it was because God had previously loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "To remove all occasion of enmity, and to reconcile us completely to him-

self, he abolishes all our guilt, by the expiation exhibited in the death of Christ, that we who before were polluted and impure, may appear righteous and holy in his sight. The love of God the Father therefore precedes our reconciliation in Christ; or rather, it is because he first loves, that he afterwards reconciles us to himself. But because, till Christ relieves us by his death, we are not freed from that iniquity which deserves the indignation of God, and is accursed and condemned in his sight; we have not a complete reconciliation to God before we are united to him by Christ.—This doctrine is clear and consistent with the Scripture, and admirably explains the different passages, where it is said, that God manifested his love by the gift of his only begotten Son, and yet that he was our enemy till he was reconciled by the death of Christ."* It is an incontrovertible principle that God is gracious and compassionate; that he is unchangeable in his disposition to shew mercy; and that he wants no extraneous motive to induce him to pity and relieve our miserable world.—It is unnecessary to add, that He is eternal and immutable in the absolute perfection of his nature and attributes: and that therefore all such representations of the sacrifice of Christ as imply its having effected a change in God, and having turned him from implacability and wrath to kindness and grace, are grossly erroneous and unscriptural.

* Calvin's Institutes, B. ii. ch. xvi.

II. God is holy and righteous, as well as gracious and merciful. Our notion of the absolute perfection of the divine nature includes this; and it is the uniform representation which is given of the character of God in the Scriptures.* He is eternal and unchangeable in his love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity, as well as in his kindness and compassion; and though his power be absolute, he cannot deny himself, nor do what is opposed to the moral principles of his nature,—his holiness, justice, wisdom, and truth. His boundless compassion therefore is not incompatible with the most perfect hatred of sin, or with a fixed, and unalterable determination to punish it. "He is righteous in taking vengeance. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." He, the righteous Lord and Ruler, who only knows what is due to himself, and who only can determine what are the terms on which he will receive transgressors into his favour, has unequivocally shewn by the procedure of his government, that before his mercy could reach sinful men, or his friendship be renewed with them, it was necessary that his righteousness should be vindicated, and his abhorrence of all iniquity be fully and impressively shewn. The death of Christ, as an atonement to divine justice, accomplished these great purposes.

* See this subject treated at length in my Elements of Mor. Phil. vol. i. p. 306.

A benevolent ruler may be strongly inclined to exercise mercy to the violator of the law when the claims of justice interpose to prevent him. "We can conceive of a wise and good government being cordially disposed and greatly desirous to pardon an offender; but unable to gratify this gracious disposition, because it can find *no just grounds* for such an act, and it is aware that a pardon arbitrary and destitute of just reason would relax the obligations of law, bring dishonour upon public justice, and prove of pernicious example throughout the whole community."* When, therefore, the Scriptures teach us that Christ by his sacrifice effected our reconciliation with God, we are to understand that his atonement presents to the Supreme and Righteous Ruler a just and valid ground or reason for pardoning sinful men, and extending to them the tokens of the divine favour and friendship. It was at once the expiation for sin by which ample satisfaction was given to offended justice; and the propitiation which possessed every property of disposing a holy, righteous, and merciful God, in the exercise of his judicial authority, as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, to manifest himself to a guilty world, as reconciled in Christ Jesus. It has effected a most perfect reconciliation between the claims of God's authority, veracity, and moral government, and "the exercise of his benevolence, in rescuing from ruin, and restoring

* Smith on the Sacrifice of Christ, p. 137.

to holiness and happiness those of mankind whom he may judge proper thus to bless."

The design of a propitiation, indeed, is to turn away the displeasure of the person offended, and thus to bring the offender again into his favour. He to whom the offence has been given, however, must be willing to be appeased before reconciliation can be effected: but we are surely not entitled to argue, from his willingness to be reconciled, against the greatness of the provocation which has been given him, the reality of his anger, and the necessity of adequate satisfaction in order to remove it. He may very properly have such a sense of the wrong which has been done to him, and of the indignity which has been offered, affecting, it may be, the estimation in which others will be disposed to hold his character and government, that he will not be reconciled to the offender, or admit him into his friendship, without such a public vindication of his honour as is included in an atonement: while, at the same time, from the great benevolence of his nature, he may have the disposition to be reconciled, and even prescribe the atonement, which for this end he will accept. We have an exemplification of this in the book of Job, as was formerly noticed.

Mankind, by their revolt and rebellion against God, provoked his anger, and incurred the penalty of his law: but He in infinite mercy provided a Saviour, who, by the sacrifice of himself, turned away the

wrath of God due to us, and thus effected a reconciliation. This was the design, as it was the effect, of the atonement. Hence, God is represented as reconciling us to himself by Jesus Christ, and as inviting us to the enjoyment of his favour and friendship, on the ground of the propitiation made by his blood. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation." Here we are said to receive the reconciliation, by which is obviously meant, not our conversion to God, which is felt and experienced, not received,—but the divine favour offered through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

That this only is the scriptural import of the reconciliation which has been effected by the death of Christ, appears from the observations already made. Its truth, however, will be fully established by considering the peculiar acceptation of the terms "reconcile," and "reconciliation," in Scripture:—the common signification of the words used by the inspired writers;—and by analyzing the different passages in which they occur in the New Testament.

1. Let us advert to the peculiar acceptation of the terms reconcile and reconciliation in Scripture. It is true, we do not read in Scripture that God is recon-

ciled to us, or, that Christ reconciled God to us: the uniform modes of expression are, that we are reconciled to God; and that God is reconciling us to himself. The reason is, that we are the offending party, and that the party offending is always said to be reconciled to the party offended, and not the contrary. Accordingly, the words reconcile, and reconciliation, are used to signify, not the removal of enmity from the heart of the person who has given offence, but the turning away of his anger, and the regaining of his favour to whom the offence has been given. Thus, in that direction of our Lord in which the person addressed is supposed to have offended his brother, he is desired to be reconciled to his brother,—by which expression is meant, that he was to employ such means as were calculated to avert his displeasure, and regain his favour. When David fled from the wrath of Saul, and united himself to the Philistines, the princes of that people said respecting him, "Let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us; for wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?" It is not said that he would attempt by the means suggested to reconcile his master to him, which was what the speakers evidently meant, but that he would reconcile himself to his master, that is, appease his anger, and reinstate himself in his favour. In like manner, the wife who has deserted

her husband is enjoined by the Apostle to be reconciled to her husband, that is, to make every reasonable concession for the purpose of regaining his favour, and bringing about a reconciliation. Such, in short, is almost the invariable mode in which the terms in question are used in Scripture.

Another reason why God is not said to be reconciled to us, but we to God, may be, that God has declared himself to be reconcileable, that he actually solicits reconciliation, and that he has done every thing which his justice, wisdom, and truth, require to receive sinful men into his favour. Why, then, are not all actually reconciled to God? The obstacle consists in the unwillingness of man, and not in the want of disposition on the part of his Maker. For he commands all men every where to repent, and beseeches them, and prays them to be reconciled to him. But, like Naaman the Syrian, who when desired to wash seven times in the river Jordan that he might be healed of his leprosy, turned away in wrath because the cure was to be wrought by means so easy of attainment, they could far more readily be persuaded to do some great thing to propitiate the favour of God, than accept of the remedy which has been already provided, and which is available to all who are willing to receive it. The dread of the divine presence, arising from the consciousness of having offended God, produces the impression that something great must

yet be done, before perfect reconciliation can be effected between the Majesty of heaven and guilty creatures: and they cannot believe that the offended party, who had received the provocation, should have done, without solicitation, most freely, and without the co-operation of man, all that is necessary on his part to the re-union and friendship of heaven and earth. They are, therefore, prone to discredit the testimony of God, when he declares that all things are now ready, that he is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and that a perfect work of mediation, so entirely gratuitous as to be all of grace, has been completed by the Son of God in their room.

II. The signification of the words used by the inspired writers to denote the reconciliation effected by the death of Christ, proves the truth of the views which have been given of the nature and design of the propitiation of Christ. The words, ἱλάσκεσθαι, καταλλάσσειν, and ἀποκαταλλάσσειν, which are those used by the sacred writers in regard to this subject, signify to turn away anger, to propitiate; as much so as the Latin expressions, *iram avertere*, *reconciliare*, *propitiare*, *placare*. The verb ἱλάσκομαι signifies to render propitious, to make atonement for. It occurs twice in the New Testament, Luke xviii. 13: ἱλάσθητί μοι. "When it is considered that prayer made in the temple was an accompaniment of the offering of sacri-

fices of propitiation, and that the publican is represented as having gone up to the temple to pray, there seems much propriety in rendering his words,"—or in understanding them as signifying, " O God, let me enjoy that mercy from whence flows the pardon of sin, by thy being appeased towards me, and reconciled unto me." In Heb. ii. 17. ἱλάσκεσθαι τας ἁμαρτίας του λαοῦ is translated to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and rendered by the Latinists *Expiare peccata populi:* that is, to expiate the sins of the people by an atonement, and so to turn away wrath. Hence ἱλασμὸς which is also twice used in the New Testament (1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.) denotes propitiation, an expiation, or propitiatory sacrifice—that which conciliates the person offended. Christ, says the Apostle John, is the propitiation for our sins.—" Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Hence also ἱλαστήριον, Rom. iii. 25. a propitiatory, or an expiatory sacrifice. ἱλαστήριον of course requires the supplying of its understood substantive; and though ἐπίθεμα be often that substantive, here θῦμα is more congenial to the explanatory clause. But if the elipsis of ἐπίθεμα be preferred, the effect will be the same; for the sprinkling of the blood upon the mercy-seat was the presentation of the sacrifice already offered: ἐπίθεμα is of course understood in the only other passage in which the word occurs in the New Testament,

Heb. ix. 5. in which the Apostle speaks of the mercy-seat, the lid, or the covering of the ark, on which the high-priest was to sprinkle the blood of the expiatory sacrifices on the great day of atonement, and where God promised to meet his people. But ἱλαστηριον signifies, whether θῦμα or ἐπίθεμα be understood, an expiatory or propitiatory sacrifice. Josephus having observed that the blood of the martyrs had (according to his notions) made atonement for their countrymen, and that they were ὥσπερ αντιψικον, "as it were a substituted victim," της του εθνους ἁμαρτίας, for the sin of the nation, continues thus, καί δια του αἵματος των ευσεβων εκείνων και του ἱλαστηριού του θανάτου αυτων, ἡ θεία πρόνοια τον Ισραήλ διεσωσε. "Through the blood of those pious men, and the expiatory sacrifice of their death, the divine providence saved Israel."*

With regard to the verb καταλασσω—compounded of κατα and λασσω, or λαττω, used also in reference to this subject in several passages of the New Testament, though it primarily signifies to change, it very naturally and appropriately came to be applied to the reconciliation of parties, whose alienation and enmity have given place to forgiveness and friendship. Their minds are then differently affected towards each other. They have exchanged, or changed each other's differences, that is, they have mutually laid them aside. Exam-

* See the Rev. G. Ewing's Greek Lexicon on the word referred to.

ples of the word in this its common acceptation might be given from the Classics. They are adduced by Wetstein from Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Athenæus: and he might have added Herodotus and Thucydides, iv. 59. vi. 89. The word must be understood as implying, "On the part of God, the granting of pardon, and affording the means of obtaining and preserving his future favour; and on the part of man, a humble and thankful acceptance of the offered boon. This will apply to all the passages of the New Testament, in which the phrase when used of God occurs."*

With respect to the nature of this reconciliation, and the means by which it has been effected, we are expressly told that when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son (*κατηλλαγημεν τω Θεῶ δια του θανάτου του ὑιου αυτου*). We have already abundantly proved that his death was of a sacrificial nature; that its effect was the removal of his wrath as the offended moral Governor of the world; and to reconcile the exercise of his mercy to sinful men, with the authority of his government. To place this position in the clearest light, let us,

III. Advert to the different passages of the New Testament, in which the phrase occurs in reference to God. The first which I shall notice, is that which has just been quoted, Rom. v. 10. "When we were

* See Bloomfield's Crit. Digest on Rom. v. 8—11.

enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." That the design of this expression is, that we were reconciled to God by the averting of his anger from us, and our being received into his favour, is proved by the following considerations. First, because it is said in the immediate annexion, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us,—that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. For it was formerly shewn that Christ's dying for us, signifies his dying in our room, and bearing the penalty of transgression in our stead. Secondly, this reconciliation is said to have taken place when we were enemies, and when consequently we were exposed to the displeasure of our Maker. But when we say that a conquered rebel is reconciled to his prince, what do we mean? Is it that he begins to love his prince only, or that his prince lays down his wrath and pardons him? In like manner, the reconciliation of rebellious man to God his Supreme Sovereign, must signify the removal of his displeasure, and his being received into favour. Thirdly, we are said to have received the reconciliation. This cannot be spoken in reference to our conversion to God, but of his reconciliation to us, and of our obtaining his favour; because, as was formerly remarked, conversion is felt and experienced, and not received.

The next passage is 2 Cor. v. 18—21. "All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus

Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

It is obvious that our reconciliation to God, and his to us, is expressed in these verses. The latter only is that to which our attention is at present directed. That this consists in his anger being turned away by Christ, and in sinful men being brought into his favour through his sacrifice for sin, is proved by the following particulars mentioned in this passage.

First, the effect of God's being reconciled, or his reconciling the world to himself is, "not imputing to them their trespasses:" that is, he remits, for Christ's sake, the penalty due to our sins, lays aside his anger, and receives us into favour. Secondly, the reason assigned for this procedure is, that He made Christ to be sin for us who knew no sin. As we are made the righteousness of God by his righteousness being reckoned to us, so he was made sin, or a sin-offering for us by his suffering in our room. "Now for God to reconcile us to himself by imputing our sin to Christ, and thereon not imputing it to us, can be nothing but his being

appeased towards us, with his receiving us into his favour, by and upon the account of the death of Christ." Thirdly, the Apostles were authorized to declare that God is reconciling the world to himself by the blood of Christ, and to beseech men to accept of the tidings, and to be at peace with God.

There are other two passages in which our reconciliation to God is spoken of, Eph. ii. 12—16. and Col. i. 20, 21. But both these so obviously teach, that God was reconciled to us by the death of Christ, that his anger was turned away by his atoning sacrifice, and that as the effect, pardon, and favour are proffered to sinful men;—that I conceive any further exposition of them to be unnecessary.

To prevent misconception, let it be carefully observed, in conclusion, that actual reconciliation to God, in no case takes place till men rest their hopes of pardon and acceptance on the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Whenever it is really effected, it is necessarily reciprocal and mutual. Though the *foundation* of an entire and eternal reconciliation is laid in the death of the Redeemer, it is certain that no one has an actual interest in it, till he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Peace is, indeed, proclaimed on earth, and goodwill to the children of men, because the justice of God is fully satisfied by the propitiatory sufferings of his Son: but the rich and inexpressible blessings with which his grace is fraught can only be enjoyed by those who per-

sonally accept of the proffered reconciliation. The Apostles accordingly, after describing the theme of their ministry, add, in the language of earnest entreaty, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In the comprehensive enumeration which St. Paul gives (1 Cor. i. 30) of the blessings derived from the atonement, he particularly specifies the manner in which sinful men come to the possession and enjoyment of these great benefits, "Of Him (God) are ye *in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made unto you wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."—"He that believeth on the Son hath life: he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

CHAP. VII.

ON THE MERIT WHICH IS ASCRIBED TO THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST: AND ON THE UNION OF HIS OBEDIENCE AND SUFFERINGS IN CONSTITUTING AN EFFICACIOUS AND MERITORIOUS ATONEMENT:—AS THE GROUND OF PARDON—AND OF JUSTIFICATION.

We have considered the death of Christ as a satisfaction or atonement made for our sins to divine justice: as a ransom paid for our redemption; and as a sacrifice by which we are reconciled unto God. In connexion with these views of the atonement, the Scriptures ascribe to it infinite merit,—merit not merely to procure for us deliverance from evil, but the possession of great and eternal good. Hence we are said not only to be pardoned, but justified by his blood. To the same cause is ascribed our sanctification: the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth us from all sin. Faith, and all spiritual blessings, are the fruit of his mediation, and are bestowed for his sake. The inheritance of heaven is represented as a purchased possession: and its redeemed inhabitants are said to have washed their robes, and to have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Thus the death of Christ has procured not only deliverance from sin, Satan, the curse of the law,

the power of death, and the wrath to come, but peace with God, acceptance before him, boldness to enter into the holiest by a new and living way, purity, blessedness, and everlasting glory.

Yet, we cannot but have remarked, that our justification, adoption, and sanctification, and all the blessings which either accompany or flow from them, are often attributed to the meritorious obedience of Christ. They are, in fact, ascribed at once to his obedience and to his sufferings: and the conclusion therefore is, that they are both essentially conjoined; and that we could not be saved by the one without the other. They are therefore justly regarded as uniting in constituting the perfection of the atonement. The truth of this proposition will fully appear by our considering shortly the necessity of the obedience, as well as of the propitiatory sufferings, of Christ.

Here, it is of importance to remark, that Christ was obedient when he suffered as well as at other times. It is the more necessary to attend to this peculiar circumstance, as we are apt to suppose, that because we ourselves by the constitution of our nature suffer unwillingly, the divine Substitute of sinners was altogether passive in what he endured: and, perhaps, the division of the mediatorial work of Christ into what divines have termed his active and passive obedience, may have suggested this notion. The idea may thus get possession of our minds, that when his sufferings began his

obedience terminated; and that these two are distinct the one from the other.

It is almost unnecessary to say, that no opinion can be more erroneous. Christ gave himself for us most willingly a sacrifice to God: and when he suffered, it was in obedience to the command of his Father. But all obedience must be so far active as to be performed in voluntary compliance with a command. He learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and the highest act of voluntary compliance with the will of his Father was, his becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This was the greatest trial of his obedience, that by which he chiefly procured so glorious a reward for himself, righteousness and life for his people, and on account of which God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. To his death, therefore, not only is our redemption from guilt and misery ascribed, but also our justification before God.* The precious blood which was shed to satisfy divine justice, and to atone for the dishonour of the law, was shed in obedience to the will of God; and in consideration of the Saviour's person, his infinite condescension, his continued obedience, and the perfect holiness of his nature and life, is the meritorious cause of eternal happiness to all who obey him. The obedience of his death, in this view, was the completion of the obedience of his life; both were necessarily

* Rom. v. 9.

conjoined in bringing in everlasting righteousness; and this righteousness as a perfect whole is that by which God justifies him that believeth, and on account of which he is reckoned, and dealt with, as righteous.

A very slight attention to the terms in which Scripture makes mention of Christ in regard to his sufferings, will satisfy us that he actively exercised all the principles of holy obedience in them all. The same concern for the glory of God, the same love to his law, and compassion to sinful creatures, which led him to assume the nature of man, animated him in bearing the punishment of our iniquity, and in offering himself a sacrifice unto God. "He loved me," says the Apostle Paul, "and gave himself for me." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us. Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." The same readiness with which he undertook our redemption, was shewn by him in presenting the oblation by which it was completed: and accordingly he manifested the most perfect meekness, patience, and devotedness, when experiencing multiplied sorrows and afflictions.

The necessity of the obedience of his whole life to the entire perfection and meritoriousness of his atonement is very evident. For, how could his sacrifice have been efficacious unless he himself had been perfectly holy; and how could he have been perfectly holy, unless he had rendered obedience to every re-

quirement of the law of God? Was it not necessary that he should thus magnify the law, and make it honourable? That he should fulfil by his active obedience the preceptive part of the law, as he did by his suffering its penalties; and that its high authority, and unalterable obligations, should have been vindicated and honoured? He was made under the law, as an absolute and immutable rule of moral obligation; as well as in regard to its penal sanctions; and he was therefore bound to render to the law, to which he had voluntarily made himself subject, the most perfect obedience. It was as necessary that obedience should be given and accepted in order to our obtaining the reward of life, as that merited punishment should be endured in order to our escaping from death. By bearing the penalty, the Saviour procured for his people exemption from the consequences of transgression; but by his meritorious obedience which extended through his life, and continued till the moment of his death, and by which he reflected infinite glory on the divine character and government, he has laid a foundation on which God can be just in conferring on them a title to immortal happiness. This doctrine is amply proved by the following considerations.

I. From the statement of the Apostle, Rom. v. 19. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." The mediation of Christ is here

referred to the obedience, not only of his death, but of his life. His righteousness and obedience are contrasted with the offence and disobedience of Adam; and as by the latter sin and death are entailed upon mankind, so by the former, justification and life are procured. This willing obedience of a Divine and independent Being, commensurate as it was with the perfect purity of the commandment, was in itself highly meritorious and acceptable to God. He was always conformed in heart and in will, in his love to God and man, to the high and unalterable standard of moral excellency. He discharged all the duties which it imposed, observed its rites of instituted worship, and subjected himself to its penal sanctions. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; so that the supreme moral Governor and Judge beheld in him, throughout his whole course, an object worthy of his delight and complacency. He thus by the plenitude of his continued obedience procured the righteousness which is unto all, and upon all them that believe.

II. The Apostle says (Philip. ii. 8.) that Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:—an expression which at once denotes the duration of his obedience, from the commencement of his life to its close; and that he submitted to the sufferings and agonies of that painful

and ignominious death which was inflicted on him, in obedience to the will of his Father. As his deep humiliation was consummated by the death of the cross, so was this the completion and the crowning act of his most perfect obedience,—of obedience which he continued to render when he offered himself a sacrifice without spot unto God That pure and spiritual law, the impression of which was upon his heart, and which he loved and observed during the whole of his life, he persevered to obey in his death, and by his obedience honoured and magnified its authority. The necessity of this obedience appears,

III. From what the Apostle asserts to have been a leading design of the incarnation of Christ. (Rom. viii. 3, 4.) "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The weakness here attributed to the law is not in it but in us, who are its subjects. For the law is in itself holy, just, and good; was a perfect directory to man in his state of innocence; and is the means of producing in him a conviction of his guilt and condemnation in his present fallen condition; but it is weak in regard to its inability to give him life, either by removing from him the malediction under which he lies, or by making him free from the power

of corruption. If it could not prevent his fall from a state of perfection, much less can it restore him to that condition by eradicating the principle of evil from his nature. This principle, on the contrary, is rather irritated and provoked, by the light, threatening, and authority of the law; and holds its ascendancy notwithstanding the punishment which it denounces. This is what we are to understand by the weakness of the law,—weakness which respects not its power to inflict the penalty incurred, but which regards the active observance and obedience of its commands. But Christ in our nature, and in our room, rendered to the law this active observance and obedience; and thus by his fulfilling the righteousness of the law for us, and thereby acknowledging its right to exact conformity to all its demands, all who believe in him are made the righteousness of God in him, and are placed in a position, and are furnished with principles by which they can successfully aspire to holiness, and can ultimately attain to perfect conformity to the divine image. It was thus that Christ verified his own declaration, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

In accomplishing this end, the obedience of the life

* Math. v. 17, 18.

was required no less than the suffering of death, because both were due by us to the law, and because both were necessary to procure the remission of sins, and a title to life. For the law promises life, not to the sufferer, but to the doer; and therefore it behoved our divine Substitute, to give active obedience to its precepts, as well as bear its penalty. This further appears,

IV. From the work which Christ wrought out for our justification being generally in Scripture termed righteousness. The Redeemer is described by the prophet Jeremiah as "Jehovah our Righteousness:" by the prophet Daniel as "bringing in everlasting righteousness." He is said to be made of God unto us "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.—Yea doubtless, says the Apostle, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suf-

fered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

But what is righteousness? Conformity to the rule of rectitude, a standing clear and unimpeached in regard to the moral government of God, arising from such obedience to his law as he can behold with entire approbation. This was the righteousness which was required from our first parents, and which is required from all those who would enter into life on the condition of their own sinless obedience. The law of course demanded this of Him who undertook to fulfil all righteousness; and he thus wrought out a most resplendent robe with which to cover all who should believe on him. As the paschal lamb was eaten whole by the Israelites, so is Christ to be received by us in all that he did and suffered, as the Lord our righteousness, as the way to the Father, as all our hope and salvation. The obedience of his life is inseparably united to his atoning death, and both must be rested on as the only ground of our acceptance and justification in the sight of God. As the righteousness of his life could not avail for our salvation without his atoning sufferings,

* 1 Cor. i. 30; Rom. iii. 21—25; iv. 1—10; Phil. iii. 5—9.

neither could his sufferings have been accepted as a satisfaction to divine justice, unless they had been preceded and accompanied by perfect obedience. When therefore our redemption is ascribed to his blood, and to his death, this is not to be understood as excluding the obedience of his life: it is only the most prominent part put for the whole, the last step in his course of humiliation, the completing and the crowning act of his obedience to the will of his Father.

With regard to the other part of the satisfaction or atonement of Christ, namely, propitiatory sufferings, a few remarks will here suffice. Are we then to understand that the sufferings by which he made atonement for our iniquity, and purchased our redemption, were those only which he endured on the cross, or, are we to regard as propitiatory the whole course of his humiliation? The latter view is that which we are taught by Scripture to entertain, in which the sufferings of Christ are usually mentioned without any limitation as to time. It teaches us to consider him in all that he endured as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and as bearing, during the period of his abasement, the chastisement by which our peace with God was effected. In this chastisement were included the many things which he suffered from the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, as well as the subsequent agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary: all

the while that he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Nor is this view at all at variance with the declarations, that Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree,—that by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,—that he was once offered to bear the sins of many. These expressions denote, not that his previous sufferings were not included in his atonement, but that the satisfaction which he rendered to divine justice was then consummated, and that the sins of his people were perfectly expiated. His death, as it was the crowning act of his obedience, so was it the completion of his atoning sufferings, without which all that had preceded it would have been insufficient for our redemption. From his first entrance into our world, until he said, "It is finished," he acted as our Surety and Saviour, and all the privations to which he submitted, and the sufferings which he endured, were borne for our sake. It became him as our Substitute to place himself fully in our room, that he might bear all the parts of the penalty of man's disobedience, appear in the form of a servant, lead a life of sorrow, and suffer the wrath of God by the painful and ignominious death of the cross. While all his sufferings, therefore, formed a satisfaction for sin, the agonies of his death are to be regarded as completing and consummating his great atonement. Hence the significancy of the language,—"We were reconciled to God

by the death of his Son :—in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh ;"—language which clearly teaches, that the death of Christ formed the principal part of his atonement. As death was the prominent part of the curse of the law, the death of the Surety is often spoken of as if it constituted the whole expiation for sin.

But it is obvious from the testimony of Scripture, that all the sufferings which he endured were necessary to the completion of that great expiation. Mankind had been directed to look for a suffering as well as a mighty and victorious Deliverer :—a Saviour whose introduction into our world is represented as a tender plant, and as a root springing out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty that we should desire him :—and concerning whom it was affirmed, that while the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, the Son of man had not where to lay his head. Intimately acquainted from the beginning with the whole of that course of trial and of humiliation through which he had to pass, and with all that was included in the atonement which he was to make for sin, the prospect was of itself calculated to inflict much suffering. His condition through

life, and during his public ministry, accorded with his character as the Surety of sinners;—the Lamb of God, bearing away the sin of the world.

It is, however, near the close of his course that we particularly behold the Friend and Saviour of sinners, treading the wine-press of the wrath of God alone;—bearing the load which would have overwhelmed a guilty world. Whatever degree of suffering was essentially included in the sentence of the law,—whatever of want of fruition of God's favour,—he fully endured. For he suffered in our room, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. He did so willingly, patiently, and perseveringly, till he had finished the work which was given him to do, and had announced its completion.

The death of the cross was, indeed, painful; but its pain has been endured with fortitude by some of the disciples of Christ. Why, then, should he who was perfect in patience and in resignation, have uttered such bitter complaints? It was because he made his soul an offering for sin, and that the sufferings by which he made atonement were chiefly mental. Hence, even in the garden of Gethsemane, when no man approached him, his distresses came so heavily upon him, that he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and reiterated the prayer, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." While doubtless this deep sorrow was aggravated by the in-

dignities with which he was treated, by the treachery of the disciple who had betrayed Him, and by the culpable timidity of the disciples who had all forsaken Him and fled, it was the punishment of our iniquity, inflicted by the Righteous Ruler and Judge, that caused his peculiar distress. It was on the cross that this agony was consummated, while God bore testimony against the disobedience of man, by mysteriously withdrawing from his Surety his gracious presence. The sorrow of Gethsemane, though forming a part of the satisfaction for sin, was only a prelude to the darkness not less awful in which the Son of God was enveloped, with which even nature seemed to sympathise, when the sun veiled his glories, the earth trembled, the rocks were rent, the graves were opened, and when the Divine Sufferer exclaimed in language the full significancy of which we cannot conceive, that his God had forsaken him. It was in this way that he poured out his soul unto death, made intercession for the transgressors, satisfied divine justice, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

Thus, did he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: and so necessary was this atonement to our salvation, that the perfect obedience of his life would have been unavailing without it. Hence the prominent place, as has been already remarked, which the sacred writers assign to the death of Christ in procuring our redemption. He thus paid the debt which was

due by us to divine justice,—the price of our redemption from condemnation and misery: and by the immaculate holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, his propitiatory sufferings and death, he wrought out a perfect righteousness for us. All his acts of condescension and obedience, and all his sufferings, were for us; and therefore it is solely by his satisfaction that we are released, and by his merits that we are justified. To the completeness and the glory of his work, the highest angels can add nothing; far less can we, whose services are imperfect, whose righteousness is polluted, and whose iniquities like the wind have taken us away. The righteousness of Christ stands prominently out from all the dishonouring additions which man would make to it; and its perfection renders it incapable of being united to any thing that is ours as the ground of justification. Even if our works had been more faultless than they are, how could they add any thing to the infinite fulness of his oblation, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God; and whose obedience is so meritorious, that God has raised him to his own right hand, and promised eternal life to all who believe on him?

The whole work of Christ, then, including his perfect obedience, and his atoning sufferings, is to be viewed as expiating the penalty of man's transgression, and meriting for him eternal life. The second of these

purposes was, in regard to Christ, involved in the first; because that while giving the satisfaction which the law required, his obedience was infinitely meritorious. Though in the abstract, satisfaction to a violated law is properly to be distinguished from merit; yet, in the case of One who gave infinite worth to whatever he did or suffered, the latter is necessarily included in the former. All that he did and suffered in the nature which he had assumed, was done and suffered in the character of a Saviour: he lived and died not for himself, but for his people: and though as God he could neither obey nor suffer, yet, his divine nature being united to the human, and both in one person, gave infinite excellency to every part of his mediatorial work. So pleasing was the whole course of his humiliation, obedience, suffering, and death, to the Father, that he loved him on account of it. His work, because it was that of God manifest in the flesh, has unlimited efficacy,—an efficacy to display in brighter glory all the divine attributes in the salvation of man,—an efficacy which God has owned and honoured by making it the ground on which he offers pardon, justification, and life to every creature. Who can estimate what is due to the Son of God in coming down to this world, and in magnifying the law by his obedience and sufferings? In testimony of the estimation in which the great Lord of heaven and earth holds the merit of his Son, he has exalted him far above all

principalities and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named. Angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, every creature in heaven, feel so impressively the infinite value of his mediatorial services, that they are made the chief theme of their praise. They "fall before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, and they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Though the obedience of Christ and the sufferings of Christ, the satisfaction which he rendered, and the merit which he acquired, be thus closely conjoined; and though the blessings which flow from them be inseparably linked together; they are not therefore to be confounded as though they were one and the same thing. For it is one thing to be freed from death, but a different thing to be put in possession of eternal life: one thing to be delivered from misery; another to be raised to happiness; one thing to be pardoned, and another to be made righteous. It was therefore necessary that Christ should not only take upon himself the penalty of transgression, but merit by his obedience a title to life. In the former case, he fulfilled the threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:" in the latter, the demand of the law, in regard to which Adam, and his posterity, have

failed, "Do this, and thou shalt live." As he came into the world, not merely to procure for sinners the forgiveness of sins, but that they might have life, and have it more abundantly, he not only removed the obstacle to their pardon by suffering the punishment due to them, but gave the most perfect obedience to the law, and thereby merited for them the favour and kingdom of God. He thus has become, in the most comprehensive sense of the expressions, the Author of eternal redemption to all who obey him.

As the parts of his mediation, though distinguishable, are inseparably conjoined, so are the various blessings which he procured. Among men, the remission of the offence is rarely accompanied with the exaltation of the person who has offended to favour and honour. But the benefits of the new covenant, procured by the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, invariably accompany and follow each other. Wherever pardon is conferred, the gift of righteousness is bestowed; and justification unto life, adoption into God's redeemed family, peace with God, purification of heart, good hope through grace, and everlasting consolation are conjoined. In this way, a participation in any of the saving benefits of the covenant of grace is an earnest and a pledge that they shall all, in due time, be enjoyed. Hence the ground on which the Apostle congratulated the christians of Philippi, and of the confidence which he expressed in regard to their final salvation: "I thank

my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now; being *confident* of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

* Phil. i. 3—7.

CHAP. VIII.

ON THE INFINITE VALUE AND EFFICACY OF THE ATONEMENT: AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH RENDER IT INFINITELY VALUABLE AND EFFICACIOUS.

All must have remarked the infinite value and efficacy ascribed in Scripture to the Atonement. It is represented as possessed of boundless and perpetual virtue; and as capable of removing all manner of sin and impurity. The most comprehensive expressions are employed by the inspired writers to denote the perfection of propitiation made by the blood of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

That the sacrifice of Jesus was pleasing to God, viewed as a free-will offering for sin, and in regard to the great ends to be accomplished by it, we have varied and ample evidence. It was he himself who appointed him to this mediatorial work, and who said respecting

* 1 John i. 7; 1 Tim. i. 15; 1 John ii. 2.

him, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty: I have exalted One chosen out of the people,—Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people. Behold, my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." He promised to him as Mediator that he should always be to him a Father, even when as a Righteous Governor and Judge he should hide his face from him, and put the cup of wrath into his hands; that he would own him as a Son, and hear his voice when he should cry unto him; that his mercy he should keep for him for evermore, and that his covenant would stand fast with him. Accordingly, when at his baptism he entered on his public ministry, a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"—well pleased with his obedience, because he magnified the law, and made it honourable, and with his sufferings, because he satisfied divine justice, and opened up a way for the exercise and triumph of mercy. So grateful was his sacrifice unto God on account of the great ends to be attained by it that he was pleased with the instituted typical representation of it. On this ground he had respect to Abel when he presented the firstlings of his flock;—to Noah, when he took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour;

—to the patriarchs, in the sacrifices which they presented to God amid their sojourneyings;—and to the Levitical priesthood, in the oblations which they offered day by day and year by year continually. This work of redeeming mercy is that in which the prophet represents Jehovah as rejoicing, in comparison of the greatness and glory of which the work of creation was not to be remembered nor come into mind, and in regard to which he calls upon every being to be glad and rejoice for ever.

God has testified his satisfaction with the atonement of Christ by his raising him from the dead. This was a proof of the sufficiency and satisfactory nature of his offering, that the debt was fully paid, that he was now judicially discharged, and that none who should be united to him, would experience the penalty of transgression. By the resurrection of Christ it is declared, that truth is not on the side of those who charged him with blasphemy because he said, I am the Son of God, but on his who had averred, that the end for which he came into the world was to give his life a ransom for many.

The effusion of the influences of the Spirit is a proof of the sufficiency of the atonement. If the sacrifice of Christ had not possessed infinite value and efficacy, he could not have entered into heaven, and have sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and if he had not gone to the Father the Holy

Spirit the Comforter would not come unto us. If God could in no way more strongly shew his love to the world than in the gift of his Son, in no way could he more fully testify his delight and satisfaction in the work which his Son had finished than by sending a Divine Messenger to convince the world of sin, and to bear witness to his infinite worth. The circumstance that this oblation satisfied perfections that are infinite, proves conclusively that it possesses infinite virtue and value, and that its efficacy is sufficient for an infinite number of persons. The Redeemer commanded that repentance and the remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations; and though all mankind had availed themselves of the offer of salvation, there is ample merit to procure their pardon and acceptance.

In short, the infinite efficacy of the atonement is the great theme of the New Testament. Its boundless value is attested by the fact that God is well pleased. This is a sufficient assurance to us that full expiation has been made for iniquity,—for the iniquity of all who may believe in his name.

With regard to the circumstances which give value and efficacy to the atonement of Christ, I would speak with the humility and caution with which it becomes us to make any remarks on so profound and mysterious a subject. Nor shall I repeat what was formerly advanced in regard to the prerequisites necessary to exhibit the justice of God in the substitution of Christ.

But I shall briefly allude to a few particulars on which the inspired writers lay great stress as the causes which gave to the sufferings of Christ their great value as an atonement for sin. I notice,

I. His voluntariness in suffering, and the perfect love to God and man which he manifested during the whole course of his humiliation. To this circumstance I formerly alluded; and shall at present only take a cursory notice of it. Scripture represents the Saviour as having freely undertaken the stupendous work of human redemption. He gave himself for us,—he made himself poor,—he made himself of no reputation,—himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. This representation is in perfect consistency with the other class of scripture facts, that the Father appointed him to his work, sent him into the world, delivered him up for us all, and set him forth to be a propitiation. For the Saviour willingly acceded to the office and work which were assigned to him in the covenant of redemption; is represented as offering himself to be the Substitute of sinners, and saying, "Deliver from going down to the pit; for I will become the ransom." Nor does it impair the voluntariness of Christ's sufferings, that wicked men and wicked spirits were instruments, that Judas betrayed him, that Pilate condemned him, and that by the hands of his enemies he was crucified and slain: for he freely gave himself up, and allowed himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a

sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

The love shewn by his voluntary abasement passeth knowledge, when we consider the supreme dignity and glory of Christ. Essentially independent in his being and blessedness, it was free to him to decline the arduous work. He knew all its difficulty, all the sufferings to which it would be necessary for him to submit, all the enemies whose bitter malice would assail him, all the ignominy and agony of the concluding scene of his humiliation: for he knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. What could have prompted him even to make the mighty sacrifice included in the very assumption of the nature of man; to appear poor, sorrowful, afflicted, and despised, in the world which he had made? His associating himself thus with sinful beings, must have been inexpressibly painful to him, whose nature was exquisitely sensible, and perfectly holy. What could have led the Lord of glory to begin and to persevere in a course which demanded unexampled self-denial, patient and continuous suffering, and an ignominious death? No one could exact his life from him, for he was under obligations to none.

Yet, he spoke as if he had longed for the accomplishment of his work, and as if he had felt straitened until this should be finished by the baptism of his death. When Peter would have dissuaded him from

suffering, he sharply reproved him as though in that particular instance he had been subserving the designs of Satan. When the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Taking the twelve disciples apart in the way, he said unto them, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again." In the night in which he was betrayed, he gave his disciples a pledge in the sacrament of the Supper of his intention voluntarily to pour out his blood in expiation of their sins. When he had ended his discourse with his disciples, and had intimated to them the conflict in which he was about to engage, he went into the garden of Gethsemane though he knew the bitter agony that there awaited him, and that he should be conducted thence a victim as it were to the altar. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do: Arise, let us go hence."*

In what an affecting light do the sufferings of Christ appear when we remember that he endured them all from love—love to God, and compassion to sinful

* John xiv. 30, 31.

men. Animated by this principle in the pursuit of the noblest possible ends, he persevered with invincible patience in finishing the work that was given him to do. While he felt his sorrows, he continued to bear them. "My soul is troubled; and what shall I say?" Shall I present the petition, "Father, save me from this hour?" That were at variance with the design of my coming into the world. "For this cause came I unto this hour." Whatever may be my sufferings, my prayer is, "Father glorify thy name;" manifest thy justice and mercy in my atoning sacrifice. Had it been compatible with these and other perfections of the divine nature to save man without suffering, the innocent feelings of human nature would doubtless have led the Blessed Jesus to desire exemption. But looking to the glorious ends of his obedience unto death, and knowing that these ends could not have been otherwise attained, he cheerfully acquiesced, and said, "Not my will, but thine be done. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame."

Hence, the infinite delight and complacency with which the Father regarded the Son when presenting his sacrifice; and hence the value of the atonement which he made. In testimony of his love to him, he raised him to the glory which he had with him before the world was, commanded all men to honour him, all angels to worship him, the whole universe to be put in subjection to him: He assigned to him the throne

of supreme dominion: through him he has sent the terms of pardon and peace to all the tribes and kindreds of a rebellious world: he has declared that none of them shall ever enjoy his favour but through him; that he must reign till his enemies be made his footstool; that the nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish; that he shall make his name to be remembered in all generations; and his throne to remain for ever and ever.

II. The perfect purity of Christ gave value to his atonement. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God. On this circumstance the sacred writers lay particular stress; as, without it, the sacrifice would have been altogether in vain.

To represent the stainless purity of the Lamb of God, the animals which were offered in typical sacrifice were to be without spot or blemish. But the gentleness and innocence of the lamb were feeble emblems of the purity of him who was perfectly holy in his nature as man—holy in the discharge of every duty, and in fulfilling the righteousness of the law; and who in the exercise of his holiness rendered the most entire obedience to the will of God, under reproach, and sorrow, and suffering.

III. The dignity of Christ as true God is peculiarly that which gave value to his expiatory sacrifice. The person who presented the sacrifice was the Son of God

in the nature of man. Such an High-Priest became us;—an High-Priest who was constituted by Jehovah himself; and who because he is God, was capable of acting as our Saviour. He who appeared in human form as the Substitute and Surety of sinners is God, is the mighty God, is God manifest in the flesh. His goings forth are from eternity, even from everlasting: the Image of the Invisible God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. To him are the words addressed, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."*

The sacrifice which he offered was himself. By himself he purged our sins; he offered up himself through the Eternal Spirit. He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.

That which gave to this sacrifice an infinite value was the union of the divine nature with the human in Jesus Christ. The voluntary formation of this union by the Son of God for the purpose of achieving human redemption being an act of infinite grace and condescension, "must equally have carried forwards and

* Heb. i. 10—12.

communicated its original divine value to all the subsequent moral and mediatorial acts of the incarnate Saviour." In consequence of this constant and invariable union of the divine and human natures in the person of the Messiah,—an union which was inseparable from the moment of its commencement when the child born was called the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God;—he was the Son of God in his very lowest state of humiliation, when enduring the agony of Gethsemane, and the pains of the Cross, as entirely as before he had laid aside the glory which he had with the Father. It was impossible that the divine nature could be subject to suffering: yet it was in his whole person as God and man that the Mediator acted for the salvation of mankind: all that he did in the character of Surety, and for the accomplishment of redemption, was done by him who is God and man in one person; and therefore every act of his mediatorial office, was "impressed with the essential dignity and moral value of his divine perfection." It was the infinite glory of Christ as God that rendered his condescension so meritorious, his obedience so honourable to the law, his expiatory sufferings so expressive of the evil of sin, and of the holiness and justice of the Supreme Moral Governor of the world. Hence the frequency and emphasis with which the Sacred Writers allude to his person in connexion with the efficacy of his work. After describing him as the brightness of the Father's

glory, and the express image of his person, and as upholding all things by the word of his power, he is said, by the Apostle Paul, to have by himself purged our sins: to have offered himself without spot to God through the eternal Spirit. Such were the dignity and perfection of Christ, that he himself was the sacrifice for sin, the altar upon which it was presented, the priest by whom it was offered, and the incense by which it was acceptable and pleasing to God. The atonement which he made for sin, therefore, possesses infinite value.

In corroboration of this consolatory conclusion to which the testimony of Scripture respecting the person and work of Christ leads us, I cannot forbear to add,

IV. That Christ, by his expiatory sufferings and death, gave the most ample satisfaction to the offended law and government of God. While we affirm that the dignity of his person gave an infinite value to his atonement, we are to remember that this atonement was made by the presenting of himself to God a real sacrifice, and by the experience of intense and inconceivable sufferings. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree by actually enduring the punishment due to us; and this circumstance we must have fully in our view when estimating the worth and efficacy of the propitiation. He fulfilled the penalty of the law more satisfactorily than the everlasting punishment of sinners could have done. The sentence of the law says nothing in regard to the duration of punishment; it only requires

that the reparation should be equal to the dishonour done; that divine justice should be satisfied; and it is because this requisite compensation cannot be given by created beings, who are ever adding to their guilt, that the punishment of the impenitent is eternal. But Christ, in room of his people, did and suffered all that the law of God required: and he is therefore become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Thus, He who is God manifest in the flesh,—who is God and man in one person for ever, did most voluntarily present to God a perfect sacrifice for sin; to which his divine dignity has given infinite value. Those actions, and that atoning death, which in a mere created being, however exalted, would have fallen short of the perfection of the divine requirements, were in him most honourable to law and to justice, and fully commensurate with all their demands. Here is a foundation on which we may rest our hopes, in the full confidence that the eye of omniscience regards it with complacency; and that all who shall be found trusting to it as the sole ground of acceptance shall not perish, but obtain everlasting life. "The blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth from all sin. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him."

Let us now advert to some of those results which follow from the infinite efficacy of the atonement of Christ. The perfection of his mediatorial work,

I. Obtained for Christ himself honour and glory at the right hand of the Father; a right to save and rule his people, to apply to them efficaciously the blessings of his purchase, and to use such means in regard to providence and grace, as he might deem necessary for bringing them to their full and eternal enjoyment. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. If his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." This right to his people which the Saviour has purchased with his blood, he will assert, by making them willing in the day of his power, and by putting them in the possession of that kingdom which it is the Father's good pleasure to give them.

II. The efficacy of the atonement has removed every obstacle to the exercise of pardoning mercy, to whatever extent, and in whatever manner, it may please God to extend it. It has been abundantly proved, that there was an impassable barrier between us and the divine compassion,—a barrier raised up by our rebellion and guilt,—over which the love of God could not reach us till his law, authority, truth, and justice, were vindicated.—But Christ has removed this barrier by the efficacy of his sacrifice, and has rendered it honourable to the justice and government of God to extend pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace to sinful men.

"Where sin abounded grace does much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." We may now, therefore, with humble confidence, ask, that we may receive; seek, that we may find; and knock, that it may be opened.

III. The infinitely perfect and efficacious atonement of Christ, has made ample provision for the holiness and eternal happiness of all who sincerely rest their hopes upon it. The blessings which even in this life they receive through this medium, are varied, abundant, and graciously accommodated to our circumstances. Enlightened, sanctified, and comforted by the influence of the Holy Spirit; strengthened and encouraged by the peace, joy, and hope which the gospel inspires; they are prepared for becoming partakers of the heavenly inheritance; and in that solemn hour when all that is earthly recedes, they are supported in the view of appearing before a holy and righteous God by the stability of the sure foundation,—the perfect atonement of the Son of God. Redeemed from all iniquity, and washed from sin in the blood of Christ, they are admitted into those regions of purity and bliss where they have access to everflowing fountains of happiness, and where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

IV. The infinite sufficiency of the atonement furnishes

a ground for the most enlarged offers and invitations of mercy. Having already adverted to this particular, I shall do little more than remark, that the boundless virtue of the blood of Christ is a sufficient reason why the blessings procured by it should be offered to all mankind. If the atonement for sin made by the Son of God possess an infinite value, is it not meet that the overtures of reconciliation founded upon it should be unrestricted, and addressed to every creature? If this atonement was made for Gentiles as well as Jews, for men of all nations, of all ranks, and of all degrees of moral turpitude, and even for the chief of sinners, ought not the calls and commands of the gospel to be unlimited? We find accordingly "that the sacred writers never scruple to use large and general expressions, when treating on the subject of redeeming grace." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Now is the accepted time: now is the day of salvation. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

These large and generous invitations are addressed to all—to those who feel, and to those who do not feel, their need of them. If all men are not actually

pardoned and saved by this atonement, it is not owing to any want of efficacy in it, or to any restriction of free offer founded upon it, but to the indifference, and even aversion of those who love darkness rather than light. All are welcomed,—all are assured that Christ is able to save all those who come unto God by him; —and all have the promise that, if they come unto him, he will in no wise cast them out. The inspired teachers, the ambassadors of Christ, used the tenderest entreaty in persuading all men to repent and believe the gospel: "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God: for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

There is in these unlimited commands and entreaties, founded upon an atonement of infinite value and efficacy, an ample reply to all the reasonings of fear and of unbelief. They are a solemn declaration on the part of God of his willingness to be reconciled; that he will receive all who come to him in the new and living way which he has opened up for them; and that he will pardon fully all the sins of those who cordially comply with the invitation now sent to them. To question this, is to question the veracity of God. But how can his testimony be doubted in any circumstances? Who can doubt his benignity and boundless compassion, who are favoured with the discoveries

of the gospel? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Hence, the unrestrained freeness and fulness with which the ministers of the gospel should proclaim the mercy and grace of God to men. Under this gracious system, they are authorized to carry the glad tidings of salvation to all nations, to address them to men of every rank, station, and character, and to preach to every individual of the family of men, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Have they not the most powerful motives to do so in the infinite value of the atonement;—in the command of Him who has enjoined that the gospel should be preached to every creature;—in the boundless compassion of that God who provided a lamb for a burnt-offering,—in the power of that Divine Agent whose office it is to plead the cause of the Redeemer by convincing the world of sin,—and in the gracious promise that his word shall not return unto him void, but that it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereunto he has sent it? They should, therefore, declare the gospel of the grace of God in the unrestricted manner in which inspired teachers announced it;—with the gracious freeness and fulness in which it is exhibited in their writings; and leave the issue to that God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

CHAP. IX.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT:—ON THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL PARDON.

It has been made a question, whether the atoning Sacrifice of the Redeemer was offered for all mankind, or exclusively on behalf of those who shall in the event be saved by him.

"If the inquiry be understood to be, whether Christ died for any, so as to procure the pardon of their sins and freedom from condemnation, but omitting an effectual provision for the sincere and persevering sanctity of their hearts and lives: we answer without hesitation that, in this sense, he died for none. If the question be, Whether any child of Adam, who is convinced of his sins, humbled, penitent, and contrite, may entertain a doubt of the efficacy of the atonement for himself, or the gracious readiness of the Almighty Saviour to receive him to the enjoyment of all its benefits;—to this I answer, that no such doubt can be entertained without a false and injurious reflection upon the veracity of the divine word. The doctrine of a sovereign, gracious, and personal election, I believe to be clearly affirmed in the Scriptures, and to be as clearly

deducible by rational argument from the divine perfections. But this doctrine is totally misapprehended, if it be conceived to supersede the obligation of faith and obedience, or to limit the generous freeness with which sinners are invited to partake of the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is, undoubtedly, a glorious coincidence and harmony among all the counsels and ways of God; and therefore the gracious decree of election and the designs of redemption must be in perfect unison."*

The question is not, whether the value of Christ's sacrifice was sufficient to have been made a price for the redemption of the whole family of man; for of its sufficiency and infinite worth, there is no doubt. Neither is it the question, whether he died for men out of all nations, and of every rank and description: for, concerning this also no one can entertain a doubt, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Christ gave himself a ransom for all." Nor is the question, whether the atonement has opened a door of hope for all men; as constituting the ground on which the gospel is to be preached, and its blessings are to be freely offered *to every creature.* But it is this, whether the Father delivered up the Son to death for all men alike; and whether Jesus Christ the Son, laid down his life as a proper atonement alike for the sins of all?

* Smith on the Sacrifice of Christ, p. 76.

The affirmative of this position is held not only by Arminians, but by some who hold the doctrine of election. The latter maintain in common with the former that the atonement of Christ had a reference to mankind without exception or limitation. They think that the sovereignty of grace is shewn, not in designing the remedy for any particular number of persons, but in the actual application of it according to the good pleasure of God. The atonement, say they, is limited in regard to the application of its efficacy to the elect, and to them only; but it was made equally for the whole family of man. "They think, that Christ by taking our sins upon him, and satisfying for them, purchased our reconciliation to God, and therefore eternal life only upon condition, that then only that merit can have its effect in us, if we believe; so that the possibility of our salvation is purchased by Christ, but salvation itself remains to be communicated by God, to whom he thinks fit, and upon conditions he shall be pleased to prescribe."*

Against this view, it is argued, in the *first* place, That the Scriptures expressly affirm, that Christ saves his people from their sins; that he laid down his life for the sheep; that he loved the church, and gave himself for it; that his death was designed to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad: *Secondly*, That his death as an atonement for sin is

* Witsius's Irenical Animadversions.

restricted to those who have been given to him by the Father. "Thou hast given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Those who were thus given to Christ to save are characterised in Scripture as the people whom he knew, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, as children of the promise, the seed of Abraham, vessels of mercy prepared unto glory;—blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as God hath chosen them in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Thirdly, The restriction of the Saviour's atonement to those who shall eventually be saved by it, is argued from the connexion between the atonement of Christ, and his intercession. Does it not seem reasonable to believe that the different parts of his priestly office should have the same latitude; and that if his intercession be restricted, the propitiation on which it is founded must also be limited to the same extent? Has he given satisfaction on the cross for multitudes for whom he declines interceding in heaven? But that our Lord restricts his intercession to those who have been given to him by the Father, he himself expressly affirms: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."*

Fourthly, This position is maintained on the ground

* John xvii. 9.

of the connexion between the gift of the Son, and the gift of the Spirit. These two are given by God to accomplish the salvation of his people; and they are conjoined in Scripture as cause and effect in the production of this work. Is it not reasonable to believe that the Saviour has obtained salvation by his death only for those to whom he effectually applies it by his Spirit? It is certain, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Fifthly, This doctrine is maintained from the infinite love of Christ to those for whom he died. "Greater love," says he, "has no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends. Scarcely for a righteous man would one die; yet, peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die: but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Is it, then, to be supposed that Christ in his death had the same love to Judas as to Peter, to those who perish as to the many sons and daughters whom he brings to glory: to those who, prior to his advent, were actually suffering the punishment due to their sins, as to patriarchs and prophets who were enjoying the blessings of his atonement?

Sixthly, This doctrine is also maintained from the nature of Christ's suretyship. He voluntarily engaged to render satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of all those for whom he was Surety. He died not merely for their good, but as their Substitute in their room; and bore the punishment—the whole punishment due to their transgressions. But that many are not healed by the stripes which Christ endured, and that consequently they shall bear their own punishment, it is unnecessary for me to prove. How can the justice of God require satisfaction for their sins, if it were before satisfied for them in Christ? How could they be punished for their sins, if indeed Christ had borne these sins in his own body on the tree?

Finally, Christ has merited faith, holiness, and eternal life, for those for whom he died. To his atoning death is ascribed, as the meritorious cause, the deliverance of his people from all evil, and their restoration to holiness and happiness. Even that faith by which they are united to him is the gift of God, and has been procured by the death of Christ. He is said to be exalted to the right hand of God for to give repentance as well as the remission of sins. He is said to be the Author and the Finisher of our faith; because that faith which he bestows is an important part of the salvation which he purchased; and because the Spirit by whom it is implanted in our hearts is given as the fruit of his death. But if Christ merited faith and

repentance, grace and glory, for all those for whom he died; and if he died for all, how comes it to pass that these things are not communicated to, and bestowed upon, all? Is the defect in the merit of Christ, or in the justice of God?

I do not conceive it to be necessary to enter farther on the discussion of this subject. It is certain, that they only do partake of the benefits of the atonement to whom its efficacy is applied by the Holy Spirit. "All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me: and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."* The following propositions in relation to this profound subject can scarcely be questioned; and they are sufficient for our faith and practice.

I. The atonement of Christ in regard to its intrinsic value is sufficient for all. The Scriptures fully and strongly set forth its infinite worth and efficacy. The value of his sacrifice as an expiation for sin follows from the transcendent dignity of him who offered it without spot unto God. It has an innate perfection sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and to have made satisfaction for the sins of every man in the world. Such is the worth of the Saviour's death,

* John vi. 37. See on this subject Dr. Thomson's admirable Treatise, entitled, "The Doctrine of Universal Pardon considered and refuted;"—a work which for splendid eloquence, accurate and profound views of divine truth, has seldom been equalled: and a work which will be read when the silly heresy of which it is the triumphant refutation is forgotten.

such the infinite fulness and sufficiency of the oblation of himself, that it was perfectly able to redeem, justify, reconcile, and save the whole human race. In virtue of it, he has acquired the right of saving to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him.

II. The Scripture furnishes the warrant to every individual to receive the blessings of this infinitely efficacious atonement. Every man has here the authority and commandment of the everlasting God as the ground of his faith in accepting of Jesus Christ as made of God unto him wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In proof of this, I need only refer to the words of that commission which our Lord gave to his Apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."* These words were understood by the Apostles in their obvious and literal signification: for they proclaimed to men of all nations, and of every rank and character, the glad tidings of salvation. They warned every man, and taught every man in all wisdom; that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. "Be it known unto you," says the Apostle Paul, to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia—"Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things."

* Mark xvi. 15, 16.

For any one, therefore, to doubt the willingness of God to receive him through Jesus Christ, is virtually to discredit the veracity of God. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."*

Was not the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the midst of the Israelitish camp, with the declaration of its use, a sufficient warrant to every man when bitten by a fiery serpent to look unto it? Does not the Saviour teach us, that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life?† Are not the large and generous invitations of the gospel addressed to all men without limitation? Does not our Lord counsel even the self-sufficient Laodiceans to apply to him for those blessings, which, though ignorant of their wants, they absolutely required? "Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and

* 1 John v. 9, 10. † John iii. 14, 15.

that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."*

The language of Scripture abundantly proves, that God commandeth all men every where to repent; and that all men, without any exception or limitation, are enjoined to believe in Christ for acceptance and eternal life. This may justly be considered as the first and the great commandment which God issues to sinful men by the gospel; and obedience to this is indispensably necessary on their part to prove their disposition to return to God. To refuse obedience to this is to remain unreconciled to God, and to be chargeable with that unbelief which is represented in Scripture as the special ground of condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."†

III. This express warrant to every member of the family of man to believe on Christ for salvation, is in perfect accordance with what the gospel requires mankind to believe. What, then, does the revelation of mercy require those to whom it is addressed to believe? Is it not that they have all sinned and come short of

* Rev. iii. 17, 18. † John iii. 18—20.

the glory of God; that their salvation is not to be found in themselves; and that they cannot be accepted or justified by their own services? Are they not commanded to rest in Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him, and to bear the burden of the weary and the heavy laden? Is not each required to believe the infinite value and efficacy of the blood of Christ to make him free, humbly trusting to it, from all condemnation, and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness?

"Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord:"—let the controversy between us be adjusted, and let us be fully reconciled:—"though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This kind proposal issues from God immediately after he has described the character of the rebellious children to whom he addressed himself, has charged them with the guilt involved in impiety and hypocrisy, and adduced varied and ample evidence of their impenitence. He gives this invitation to those who had fallen under the condemnation of his law, who were liable to its penalty, who were adding to their guilt by their forgetfulness of God, and their disobedience to his authority. This gracious entreaty which reaches all to whom the gospel is sent, is intended to announce, that all things are ready,—that God has opened the way for his compassion and mercy to reach us in consistency with his

justice,—that he has appointed a medium through which to bring the controversy between us to an end, by uniting us in friendship to himself in truth and in kindness for ever;—and that if we are only willing, this reconciliation will be effected, and unalterably sealed by the sacrifice of the cross.

These are the gracious invitations of the gospel: these are what it requires all to believe. No one is excluded from its abundant blessings, who is willing to receive them.

IV. Notwithstanding, it is certain that some do perish. This admits of as little doubt as the propositions which have been already stated. I say nothing regarding those who have never heard the gospel, because it belongs not to man to decide concerning their final condition. But have there not been persons in every age, who, though favoured with all the light of the people who knew the joyful sound, have lived and died, despising the redeeming work of Christ, and setting at nought his great salvation? Has not the Saviour informed us, that many will hereafter be excluded from his gracious presence? "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

* Matth. vii. 22, 23.

The practical conclusion which I would deduce from these observations is this, that the sacrifice of the Redeemer was offered on behalf of all who believe on him unto salvation. As it is sufficient for the whole world, and as the blessings procured by it are offered to all mankind, so would it be available for the redemption of all, if all were cordially to embrace it. This holds out the most ample and sufficient encouragement to all men to believe the gospel; while there is no compromise of truth, and the counsels of God are exhibited as unchangeable, and his ways past finding out. Man is thus brought to know, by his fully accepting of Christ, that the Saviour has laid down his life for him, that he is the object of the Father's love, and that therefore he shall never perish, but obtain everlasting life.

But while the atonement of Christ is thus infinitely valuable and efficacious, the doctrine of universal pardon is untrue, unscriptural, and highly pernicious. Man, while unregenerate, is, notwithstanding the perfection of Christ's oblation, under the guilt of sin, and a child of wrath. The execution of the arrest which has gone forth against him is indeed suspended, but it is not recalled; and he remains under the curse, and obnoxious to all the consequences of his transgression. This does not affect the boundless sufficiency of the Redeemer's sacrifice, which has satisfied the justice of God, magnified his law and made it honourable,

declared his righteousness in the remission of sin, and which presents him to the view of the universe as a just God, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus. The reconciliation on his part has been effected; the means requisite for attaining this were provided by himself; in consequence of which he manifests himself in the gospel as the God of peace, and as willing to receive into the arms of his love all who will come to him in the new and living way which has been consecrated by the blood of his Son. The fruits of the death of Christ are, prior to our believing, deposited in the hands of God, to whom as a sacrifice it was offered; and they are by him, in his appointed time, and to whatever extent it may please him, effectually applied to the souls of men. When any are brought savingly to believe in Christ, they are absolved from the condemnation of the law, and are interested in that righteousness by which they are made righteous in the sight of God: they come to the possession of these benefits by faith, not because faith is in any degree the meritorious cause of that complete forgiveness which the death of Christ procured, but because it is by faith they are united to the Redeemer.

A child, if acquainted with the Bible, might refute the doctrine of universal pardon, and show its absurd, unscriptural, and pernicious character; that it is at variance with the statements of the Sacred Oracles concerning the condition of all men before regenerated

and united by faith to Christ; that the principle on which it rests is subversive of all the doctrines of the gospel; that it contradicts the account which the Scripture gives of the character and state of those whom God has pardoned; and that it is repugnant to the purity of the Divine character, and consequently subversive of the interests of morality.

There is no truth more frequently and fully taught in Scripture than this, that all mankind, before actual reconciliation to God, are in a like state and condition;—that there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before God. What is meant by this if it be not, that the wrath of God abideth on them,—that they are alienated from him,—that they are under the condemnation of his law,—subjected to the dominion of sin and Satan,—and obnoxious to the judgment of God? This is the state of all men,—a state from which none are delivered, till they flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. It is union by faith to Him who is as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, that makes the difference—that gives believers deliverance from wrath, pardon of all sin, and peace and reconciliation with God. Their character is changed as well as their condition: and while it is declared that there is no condemnation to them, it may also be said, that they walk not after the flesh, but after the

Spirit. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

The principle upon which the doctrine of universal pardon rests is subversive of all the doctrines of the gospel. The advocates of this tenet reason thus: God has loved all mankind, and has sent his Son to die for them all, and so to procure pardon for them all. Their pardon therefore was fixed in the mind and purpose of God from eternity, and actually sealed to them when the atonement was made. The design of the gospel is to inform them of this. How weak and false is this reasoning! Even though it were granted that all men are the objects of God's eternal love, how could it follow from this that they are therefore actually pardoned? God purposed from eternity to create this world, and to people it with human beings; but was the world therefore created and peopled from eternity? He purposed from everlasting to save, sanctify, and glorify a great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, and tribe, and kindred, and people: but was this blessed assembly, therefore, saved, sanctified, and glorified from everlasting? His determination is that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust: is the resurrection therefore past already? He has purposed that there shall be a day of judgment; has the universal judgment therefore taken place? In this

way the great facts and doctrines of the gospel will be shewn to be mere illusions: the wrath of God, and all its effects, will exist only in our apprehension.

The pardon of sin is the act of God, passed in regard to beings that really exist, and who require, at the moment the boon is bestowed, the mercy and grace included in it. They are no more pardoned before this in consequence of the purpose of God to grant forgiveness through the atonement, or of the efficacy of the death of Christ as a sufficient ground on which to bestow it, than the world was made from eternity because God purposed that it should be created. The infinite value and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, present a ground on which God may in his own time and way extend forgiveness to sinful men. The design of the gospel is to reveal this way to mankind; and to direct them in the exercise of repentance and of faith, to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

CHAP. X.

THE REALITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

THAT Christ by his death made a real atonement for the sins of mankind, has been fully proved in the course of the foregoing chapters. But there are certain considerations to which I shall now allude, although they have been already incidentally stated, from which this fundamental doctrine of Christianity may be clearly inferred.

I. Christ was a priest in the literal and proper sense of the term, and in this character offered unto God a true sacrifice for sin. To offer sacrifice was, as we have seen, the principal duty connected with the priestly office. This, as the Apostle informs us, was the primary end of its institution. "For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."*

The reality of the sacrifice of Christ follows so obviously and necessarily from the admission of the reality of his priesthood, that Socinian writers have attempted to maintain, that he is a priest only in a

* Heb. v. 1, 2.

metaphorical sense; and that he has been so called on account of his resemblance to the priests of former dispensations in their official privilege of drawing near to God. It is unnecessary here to enter on the refutation of an opinion so manifestly opposed to many of the direct statements of scripture. A main object of the epistle to the Hebrews is to prove that the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Aaron; that he is made an high-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec; and that it is because he has an unchangeable priesthood, that he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. The priests under the law were sinful men; and it was necessary, therefore, that they should offer sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. But Christ possessed the character and the qualifications of the high-priest whom we require, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. This reasoning, however, pursued as it is by the Apostle Paul in the epistle referred to, is without foundation unless Christ be a priest in the literal and proper sense of the term. For whatever may be his superiority to Aaron in other respects, he cannot be above him in regard to an office which he does not really and truly possess. But his priesthood and oblation are represented as far surpassing in excellency and efficacy those of the sons of Aaron. "For the law maketh men high-priests which

have infirmity; but the words of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."*

The reality of Christ's priesthood, and consequently of his atonement, is evident from the covenant of redemption. In that covenant it was stipulated that he should take upon him the nature of those whom he was to save; that in this nature he should be a servant, and yield obedience to his Father; and that because the typical sacrifices of the law possessed no intrinsic value, he should himself suffer and undergo all that was due to his people. The principal work which was prescribed to him, was that of a priest, to make atonement for sin by the offering up of himself a sacrifice to God. Having been constituted a real priest, it was necessary that he should offer to God a real sacrifice. But this could not be any of the sacrifices which were common to the Levitical priesthood; for these though numerous, and offered daily, occasionally, and annually, had no intrinsic efficacy to take away sins. The sacrifice which he offered was himself;—an oblation as far superior to the sacrifices of the law as the priesthood of Christ was superior to that of Aaron. They answered ends worthy of the divine wisdom, by affording a lively representation of the method in which the new and better covenant between the Father and the Son, secures the redemption of

* Heb. vii. 28.

man; and of the sufferings of the Redeemer to be undergone in the fulness of time, when he should make atonement by the offering up of himself. They were typical of his real substitution in our room, and of his giving his life a ransom for us.

II. The reality of the atonement is justly inferred from the views which the Scripture gives of the justice of God, and of its manifestation in the sacrifice of Christ. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness (justice); that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth on Jesus."*

In order to see the force of the argument for the reality of the atonement arising from the considerations involved in this statement, it is necessary to have scriptural views of the character of God. It is because he is essentially and infinitely holy and righteous that he hates sin, and cannot but inflict upon all who are chargeable with it, an adequate punishment. To suppose that justice is not an inherent and essential attribute of his nature, and that as the Supreme Moral Governor he will not exercise it, in vindicating the honour of his government, is to entertain an opinion directly opposed to the representation which God has given of himself in his works and in his word. The

* Rom. iii. 25, 26.

statements of Scripture confirm the deductions of reason concerning him as a Being necessarily possessed of every possible perfection, who from the purity which essentially belongs to him, cannot but regard sin with abhorrence, and be disposed to show his displeasure against it. He is said to be of purer eyes than to behold evil, and to be unable to look on iniquity: expressions which ascribe to him the strongest detestation of sin. In language of similar import Joshua addressed the children of Israel, "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God;* he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins:" the meaning of which words is, that God will surely punish sin because he is most holy; and that he will visit with deserved judgment all who violate his command. "For thou art not a God," says the Psalmist, "that hast pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee; the foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all the workers of iniquity; thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing; the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."†

God is represented in Scripture as a Judge who executes judgment in righteousness, and from whose justice impartial retribution necessarily flows. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The day of final account is on this ground denominated the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

* Joshua xxiv. 19. † Psalm v. 4—7.

The manifestation of his justice in this way is celebrated by the inhabitants of heaven: "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."* God is thus presented to our view as essentially holy and just; and as exercising his justice in rewarding the righteous and in punishing the wicked.

The innate sentiments of mankind are in perfect accordance with this representation of the divine character. It is their natural conviction that the judgment of God is, that they who do wicked things are worthy of death. Even Barbarians concluded in regard to the Apostle Paul, when they saw a viper entwining itself around his arm, that no doubt he was a murderer, whom, though he had escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffered not to live. Hence the dread which is felt in appearing before God, the fear of punishment arising from the consciousness of guilt, and from a sense of divine and avenging justice. This fear has shewn its operation in various ways, but in none more generally than by offering propitiatory sacrifices. Under its powerful and painful influence almost all nations have offered human victims in sacrifice for the expiation of their crimes. Even that people to whom the practice of this revolting rite was prohibited by the severest

* Rev. xvi. 5, 6.

penalties, when suffering from the consciousness of guilt, devoted their children in whole burnt-offerings to Moloch, the Idol of the Canaanites.

It is in his providential dispensations that God peculiarly displays the justice essential to his nature and government, and which is exercised in the punishment of sin. His wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. He exhibits by ever recurring examples that justice which in the phraseology of Scripture is denominated anger, wrath, fury, vengeance, in inflicting deserved punishment. He teaches us to regard all the evils which now afflict humanity as having been occasioned by the rebellion of man, and as the effects of his displeasure against sin. He assures us that He has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and that he will give to every man according to his works.

He has also exhibited impressively his holiness and justice through Jesus Christ. The infinite excellencies of the divine nature and character are more fully shewn in the person, offices, and work of the Mediator than in any other way. The wisdom and mercy, love and goodness of God, are not more illustriously manifested in the redemption of a lost world, than is his justice in requiring adequate satisfaction to his injured authority and government. So prominently is this attribute of the divine nature unfolded by the death of Christ that

the Apostle speaks as if its manifestation were a leading design of his sufferings: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his justice for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

But how could his justice be demonstrated by the death of Christ, if his death had not been absolutely necessary as an atonement for sin? How does the greatness of his love appear in not sparing his own Son, if his justice did not require this sacrifice before men could be saved? Does not the fact, that Christ suffered and died for us, attest at once the necessity of his mediation, and the reality of that atonement which, as our Great High-Priest, he rendered to God? If, indeed, the purity and justice of God were such as not to require him to punish sin, or would allow him to pardon it without any marked expression of his displeasure against it, why should he on account of transgressions which might so easily be forgiven, cause his own Son to undergo such unparalleled sufferings? What was the design of his painful and ignominious death if it was not to make a real atonement for sin? Was it his own personal correction and improvement? This it could not be, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. He was perfectly holy and undefiled and separate from sinners. Was it to deter others from sinning by the severity of the judgments inflicted upon him? To such a supposition

more formidable objections apply than those which are brought against vicarious suffering and substitution. Was it equitable to make an innocent person an example to sinners by the severity of his sufferings? Or, was it merely intended by his death that as a martyr he should bear witness to the truth? But this was placing him on a level with the Prophets and Apostles, who sealed their testimony with their blood, and who, according to this supposition, conferred as great a benefit on mankind as the Son of God. The supposition is as revolting to our judgments and feelings as it is contradictory to the tenor and to the explicit declarations of Scripture.

By the sufferings and death of Christ, then, there was a real atonement made to divine justice in order to open up a way by which the Supreme Moral Governor might, consistently with all the demands of his rectitude, and the ends of his moral government, bestow pardon, righteousness, and life, on sinful men. Nor can we be surprised that an atonement of boundless efficacy should have been required for this purpose, if we entertain Scriptural conceptions of the infinite purity and holiness of God. If, as his word declares, sin be that abominable thing which his soul hates, on account of which he is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity; —if, in consequence of the perfection of his nature he will in no wise clear the guilty; and if, without an adequate sacrifice for sin, there remaineth to sinners,

but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation that shall consume the adversaries,—then, we cannot fail to perceive the necessity and reality of that atonement which the Scriptures affirm was made by the death of Christ. It is thus we come to have just views of the evil of sin, and of the inconceivable magnitude of the grace and compassion of God, in having so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

III. The reality and the greatness of the atonement are implied in the terms in which the Scripture speaks of the love of God in the gift of his Son. This love is set forth as having a height and depth which passeth knowledge, and as expressed by the bestowment of a Saviour on the lost, and perishing children of men. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

This language intimates that there is no proportion between us and the Person whom God delivered up for us,—that in his nature and excellencies he is infinitely removed from us;—and that there is such a transcendent value in the gift thus bestowed, as leaves no room to doubt that all other things will be given unto us. The subject of astonishment is, that God's own Son, who is in nature and essence one with the Father, should not be spared, that he should have been

made the substitute of sinful men, and that the sufferings due to them should have fallen upon him. It is the inconceivable magnitude of the price paid for human redemption that excites amazement, and not the number and the value of the blessings which are freely given as the result of it. It is not surprising that spiritual and eternal blessings should flow from the sacrifice of the Son of God, and therefore, it is not on these blessings, great and precious as they are, that Scripture lays its principal stress: but it represents, in its types, prophecies, promises, statements, and thanksgivings, as the ground of unceasing wonder, that God should not have spared his own Son, but have delivered him up for us all. So deeply mysterious is this procedure, so unspeakable is this gift, so vast is the expression of love which it affords, that every other blessing which can be communicated is infinitely inferior, not to be mentioned in comparison, and is scarcely alluded to by the glorified inhabitants of heaven who are wrapt in admiration of the substitution and atoning death of God's own Son. "Thou art worthy—for thou wast *slain*—and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.—Worthy is the Lamb that was *slain* to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory and blessing."

Hence the frequency with which the death of Christ is mentioned in Scripture in immediate connexion with his Deity—to intimate that his proper divinity was

necessary to render his sufferings efficacious for our salvation. Prophets and Apostles vie with each other in the glowing language of gratitude and admiration when they allude to the divine character of the Person who came to save us, and to the incomparable greatness of the work which he achieved. "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.—Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.—Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*

IV. The reality of the atonement is implied in the character which Christ sustains as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. This will more clearly appear by

* Heb. i. 1—3; Philip. ii. 6—9; 2 Cor. viii. 9.

bearing in mind the statements which we have just quoted regarding the divine nature of our Lord; because the Scriptures represent his sufficiency as the Saviour of sinners, as arising both from what he is in himself, and from what he has done for us.

The work of saving sinful men is represented as most arduous and difficult. It is spoken of as a work peculiar to God, which required for its performance almighty power, unerring wisdom, and unwearied faithfulness and love;—a work which in its greatness and in its results, surpasseth the original creation. This work Christ has accomplished, in consequence of which he is denominated the Saviour. "There is salvation in no other; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

But what was this most arduous and difficult performance unless it was the making of that real atonement for sin which the ancient sacrifices only typified, but could not effect? This atonement for sin to divine justice, the Scriptures in explicit terms declare to have been rendered by Christ when he gave his life a ransom for many,—when he suffered for sins the just for the unjust. So ample was the expiation which he thus made by his death, and so satisfactory to the Supreme Moral Governor and Judge, that God is said to have set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his justice in its forgiveness.

Admitting that this was the work of the Saviour,

we readily see the ground on which Scripture teaches that none other than he was adequate to its performance. For, how could a mere man, or, even the highest created intelligence, perform a single act of obedience more than what on his own account it was his duty to render? Was he not bound as a dependent Being, to love the Lord God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind; and how could he do more than meet this equitable requirement of the law? But that which one is bound to do for himself, and without the doing of which he becomes a sinner, cannot possibly be available to the justification of another. If I can only pay what merely discharges my own debt, that of others, in as far as I am concerned, must remain uncancelled. There can be no transference to the account of others without diminishing in the same proportion the sum which is due from myself. If Christ were no more than a created Being, no atonement could ever have been made by him, no righteousness for the justification of sinners could have been wrought out by him; there could exist in consequence of his mediation no adequate ground for our acceptance with God; and consequently he could not be represented with truth as the all-sufficient Saviour. It is therefore in perfect consistency with their tenets that those writers who deny the supreme divinity of our Lord, reject the doctrine of atonement.

Neither, after having made the atonement, could

Christ discharge the subsequent offices of an Almighty Saviour, unless he were truly God. Man is depraved, and requires renovation after the divine image, in righteousness, knowledge, and true holiness: he is weak and dependent, and needs omnipotent strength to preserve him from the evils which are in the world: he has nothing in himself, and must be continually supplied with spiritual blessings: he is mortal, and he wants an omniscient and omnipresent Friend to guard his spirit in its passage from time into eternity, and to secure its admission into everlasting life: and, finally, he is accountable, and must stand at the tribunal of the Judge of all; and, sinful as he is, how could he look forward with comfort to the day of impartial retribution, unless he had a Saviour truly divine, who possessed infinite merit for him to rely upon? Must not he who can perform all these duties of a powerful and compassionate Saviour, to the millions of the redeemed in all ages, and at the same moment of time, possess the attributes of God, be one with the Father, and God over all? It is accordingly as God and the Saviour that he invites us to place our confidence in him: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

It hence follows, from the character which Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour sustains;—and from the peculiarity and the magnitude of the work which the

Scriptures ascribe to him,—that he made that real atonement for sin to which he alone was adequate. This full expiation of iniquity by his death was a work peculiar to himself, and constitutes him the Saviour o sinners. Though Moses is called a Redeemer, because he was instrumental in saving Israel from bondage, he is not said to have given his life a ransom for them, or to have redeemed them to God by his blood.

V. The reality of the atonement is implied in the love and obedience to which the Saviour lays claim, as well for what he has done, as for what he is. It is admitted that veneration and gratitude are due to distinguished benefactors, whether dead or living. But it is equally certain that Scripture frequently enjoins great moderation in the indulgence of such affections in regard to fellow-creatures. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" With what extreme caution do the inspired writers allow themselves to speak in the language of eulogy and encomium of the most deserving of mere mortals. But no such caution is permitted to operate when they allude to the work or to the person of the Saviour: they pour forth in praise of his matchless love and condescension,—of the great redemption procured by his death, every feeling of gratitude and admiration. They speak of his death as the procuring cause of their salvation, as the ground of their hope and confidence towards God, and as that on

account of which the Saviour himself has been highly exalted, and has obtained a name which is above every name. To his death they ever refer as the source of their peace, the price of their deliverance from present bondage, and from future wrath, and as the theme of endless exultation: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

"The Great Deliverer, in that low disguise, wrought through his design, so as none could oppose it without advancing it to the full satisfaction of that infinite wisdom that devised it, and the eternal admiration of the creatures that beheld it. The Father was well pleased: heaven and earth rejoiced, and was astonished: the powers of hell fell down like lightning. In heaven, loud acclamations and applauses, and new songs of praises, began that are not ended yet, and never will: they will still increase: still new redeemed sinners from earth, saved from the gates of hell, and entering the gates of heaven, with a new song of praise in their mouths, add to the ever-growing melody, of which they shall never weary;—giving praise and glory to Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, who redeemed them from all nations and tongues, washing them in his own blood, and making them kings and priests unto God."*

VI. The reality and magnitude of the atonement are

* MacLaurin's Sermon on the Cross of Christ.

implied in the retrospective and prospective efficacy which is ascribed to the death of Christ. That it was by means of his death the ancient patriarchs, and all the pious who lived prior to the christian era, were admitted into heaven, the Apostle teaches in Rom. iii. 25: and also in the following words in his Epistle to the Hebrews; "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others: (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world,) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

It is here declared that Christ stands in the same sacred relation to the church from the beginning of the world, in which the high-priest under the law stood to Israel; and "that if his dying once for them as a propitiatory sacrifice in the end of the world, had not been sufficient to procure their forgiveness, then he must have suffered often from the foundation of the world, because those whose offences it was requisite for him to expiate lived from its commencement, and there

is no other sacrifice which can atone for their sins." From this it unavoidably follows, that the death of Christ possesses an efficacy for procuring the redemption of mankind of a nature totally different from that which is attributed to it by the writers of the Socinian school. They could not have been benefited either by the instructions which he personally delivered, or by his example, and if they obtained pardon and eternal life through his death, his sufferings must possess a peculiar virtue, altogether different from those of martyrs, or of any other individual of the human race.

CHAP. XI.

THE REALITY OF THE ATONEMENT PROVED BY A CONSIDERATION OF THE AGONY OF GETHSEMANE.

THE circumstances by which the sufferings of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane are characterised, prove that these sufferings were of a nature peculiar to himself; that is, that they were expiatory of sin.

The scene presented to our view by this narrative* is indeed deeply affecting and mysterious. The Sufferer possesses supreme dignity and perfect innocency; the accredited Servant and Messenger of Heaven, whose multiplied works of miraculous power and beneficence, wrought during the years of his ministry, proved his divine original; but who notwithstanding was left to experience in this retirement the extreme of sorrow. The extent of his agony is shewn by the language of depression in which he tells his disciples that his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and by the unequivocal mark of the utmost mental anguish and agitation,—his sweat being as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The reiteration of

* Matth. xxvi. 36—47; Luke xxii. 39—47.

the prayer, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,"—indicates a state of mind overcome with dejection and horror. Let us draw near with humility and reverence, and behold how truly it was said of Him that there never was sorrow like unto his sorrow wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger. May we enjoy the teaching of the Holy Spirit while with sacred awe we proceed to inquire into the causes of the Agony of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane!

It is obvious that his sufferings in this retirement did not arise from any peculiarity in his external circumstances. He was accompanied only by three disciples whom he had chosen. To the other disciples he said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee." He was in the retirement of a garden, a place to which Jesus had often resorted with his disciples for prayer and devout conversation. But how different was the scene which now presented itself to their view from any thing which they had previously witnessed. While the moon shed her mild radiance on the valley of Gethsemane, exhibiting nature in those softer aspects which are calculated to sooth the mind, and would seem to invite it to tranquil thought, they beheld their Divine Master in a state of extreme dejection, anguish, and

horror. In their presence he began to be sorrowful and very heavy; and he complained that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. When we reflect on the dispassionate manner in which the sacred writers relate events, "not like men who were interested in the facts which they describe; not like men who had acted a part in the history they write; not even with the ordinary emotion of spectators; but with all the simplicity, conciseness, and brevity, of an evidence in a court of justice;" we must be convinced that the sufferings which our Saviour endured in the garden must have been great and amazing, when they are clothed by the inspired penman with all the circumstances of terror, and painted in all the colours of distress.

It is also manifest that his extreme sufferings did not arise from his knowledge of the near approach of the indignities and death which he was to endure; for of these he had always the most certain knowledge; and he anticipated their arrival, not merely with calmness, but with desire. In allusion to them he had said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it is accomplished." Nor can I conceive that the apprehension of mere bodily suffering,—and this is the only species of suffering which the opposers of the doctrine of the atonement allow the Saviour to have endured—could have produced anguish of spirit so deep, violent, and deadly. To admit this, were to suppose that our Lord was inferior in fortitude

to some of the virtuous heathen, and also to many of his own disciples, who shewed in the near prospect of death the feelings of fearless confidence and triumph. None of these things could move them, neither counted they their own lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus.

"In the ordinary course of human affairs, an innocent man of common fortitude, resigns himself with acquiescence to his fate; his integrity supports him; a good cause and a good conscience carry him onwards through life and death, undaunted and undismayed. Hence, many illustrious and virtuous men in the heathen world, supported by the native fortitude of the human mind, poured contempt upon all the forms of death, and departed with firmness and magnanimity. If a man, who had only innocence to support him, might thus acquiesce in his doom; one whose sufferings were to be publicly useful; whose death was to be glorious to himself, and beneficial to the world, might rejoice in the midst of his sufferings, and exult in the prospect of death. In the early times of the christian church, the first disciples followed their Lord in a path that was marked with blood; persons of all ranks, of all ages, and of both sexes, braved the rage of the enemy, the sword of the persecutor, the fire of the tormentor, became candidates for the crown of martyrdom, and with triumph embraced that very form of death at which

our Lord, to appearance, now trembled and stood aghast."*

The instances are innumerable in which death has been met with the most perfect composure of mind. While the Earl of Argyle had retired for repose on the day of his execution, "one of the members of the council came and intimated to the attendants a desire to speak with him: upon being told that the Earl was asleep, and had left orders not to be disturbed:—but to satisfy him the door of the bed-chamber was half opened, and he then beheld, enjoying a sweet and tranquil slumber, the man, who by the doom of him and his fellows, was to die within the space of two short hours!" "have been in at Argyle," said the councellor, "and saw him sleeping as pleasantly as ever man did, within an hour of eternity." What an acknowledgment of the superiority of virtue! What an affecting and forcible testimony to the value of that peace of mind which innocence alone can confer!"†

Even should we go from the christian to the heathen world, we shall find in Socrates an example of the calmness and fortitude with which death has been encountered. He continued peaceably "philosophising with his friends" till the moment of dissolution. But Jesus, whose purity and virtue surpassed the ideal perfection of the purest mind, whose life was passed

* Logan's Sermons, p. 168.

† Fox's Hist. of the Reign of James the Second.

in benevolent exertion, who healed the sick, who gave bread to the hungry, sight to the blind, who restored the dead to life, who wiped the tear of sorrow from the eye of the mourner, who caused the disconsolate and desponding to rejoice, who went about continually doing good;—who acted towards all with the gentleness and compassion of One who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them:—he is overwhelmed with distress, and complains to his disciples that his soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. It is impossible that this deep and agonizing sorrow should have been occasioned by the mere apprehension of bodily sufferings: because such supposition would present the Saviour to our view as possessed of firmness and fortitude far inferior to myriads of his own followers, and even to some of the heathen philosophers.

Nor will it account for the sufferings of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane that he knew how soon one of his disciples would betray him, another deny him, and all would forsake him. For, though with his exquisite sensibility, he must have keenly felt their desertion, it could not have occasioned to him great disquietude. To enjoy the presence and sympathy of numerous friends is unquestionably, in any case, an alleviation to the sufferer; and it greatly tends to compose and strengthen his mind. But our Lord from the beginning was despised and rejected of men. When he came to his own, his own received him not.

The high-priest pronounced him to be guilty of death: Pilate condemned him to be scourged and crucified: and the multitude with one voice cried out, "Away with him, crucify him." But these circumstances were always foreknown by our Lord; and even if they had not, we cannot conceive that the apprehension of their approach would have caused him overwhelming distress. The supposition is at variance with the acknowledged superiority of Christ in regard to every grace and virtue.

Neither could the sufferings of our Lord be owing to his foreknowledge of the ignominy and scorn with which he was to be treated. For though, to an innocent man, the imputation of crime be a great, if not the greatest calamity; we cannot suppose that He who knew from the beginning that he should be numbered with transgressors, and be accounted a malefactor,—who came into the world not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, would have felt it so severely as to have produced the extreme of agitation and suffering. That he keenly felt this as a trial, is manifest from the prophetical language in which he alludes to it. "I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he trusted in him. Re-

proach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none."*

We learn from the Evangelists how fully this language of prophecy was verified in the indignities which were offered to the Blessed Jesus. Are ye come against me, said he, as against a thief, with swords and with staves? Although he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, he was accused of violating the Sabbath, of blasphemy, sedition, imposture. "The men that held him mocked him, and smote him; and when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him saying, Who is it that smote thee? And when the soldiers had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."† Though in this treatment, to which the Lord of glory submitted, we discover a source of severe suffering, we cannot believe that the apprehension of it could have occasioned the bitter agony of Gethsemane. The intense anguish of his soul was shewn by the frequency with which he went to his disciples, the repetition and increasing earnestness of his prayer for its removal, and above all by his body being

* Psalms xxii; lxix. 20, 21.

† Luke xxii. 63—end.

so affected, that his blood pressed through the pores of his skin, and fell in great drops to the ground. Could the sense of shame, however deep, produce agony like this in the mind of any one, and especially in his who knew, and who had declared that what is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God, and who formed a just estimate of the value of that honour which cometh from God only? It is possible that mental distress, inconceivably poignant and severe, may be occasioned by the torments of an awakened conscience, and by a fearful looking for of judgment; but of this he could have had no experience who was perfectly holy.

As none of these causes will account for the sufferings of the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, neither is it a sufficient explanation to allege, that he now entertained doubts of the successful issue of his undertaking. For his sorrow was never that of despair;—it was not the dejection of mind which arises from the destruction of hopes long and fondly cherished. He had forewarned his disciples that it behoved him to suffer and to enter into his glory,—that the objects of his mission could not be otherwise attained;—and that his triumph could not be completed till he had entered the tomb, and despoiled the grave of its power. Hear him, when arraigned at the bar of the high-priest, assure his audience that hereafter they should see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in

the clouds of heaven. View him while on the cross, enduring sufferings that are inconceivable to us, forsaken by his friends, and in some sense by his God;—he even then assumed the language befitting the Prince of life, and the Lord of worlds, by presenting pardon and consolation to a dying malefactor, and by appointing to him a place in the paradise of God. In this, we see the confidence which no depth of tribulation could shake; the firm assurance of a joyful and triumphant termination of his sufferings, which remained with the Son of God during the thickest gloom of the hour of darkness, and which gave indications of its presence till he had completed his sacrifice, and said, "It is finished, and bowed his head, and dismissed his spirit."

Since all these causes are utterly inadequate to account for the agony of our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, let us humbly endeavour to ascertain what the circumstances really were by which it was produced. While we are incapable of fully understanding this subject, we may attain by the light of Scripture some satisfactory knowledge concerning it.

I. In all that our Lord either did or suffered, he sustained the character of our Surety. In this character he came into the world, to complete on our behalf the work of atoning sacrifice and of perfect righteousness. He took upon himself the help of man, put himself in his room, and became liable to suffer in his stead. Identifying himself with our sinful race, though

himself free from sin; and engaging to bear for them the curse of the law, he became obnoxious to the evils included in this malediction. He was now to be treated as the representative of a guilty race: and it became just in God to exact from him that debt for which he had made himself answerable. If, therefore, he became subject to poverty, temptation, and persecution; if throughout his life he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; if, at a particular stage of his course, as in the garden of Gethsemane, he endured a bitterness of agony inconceivable to us; if he was treated with indignity, if he was scourged, condemned, and crucified; it was because, as our Surety, he had made himself liable to the punishment due to us. He was thus, from the commencement of his course, a victim consecrated to the work of atonement,—the Lamb of God appointed, consecrated, and sent for the purpose of taking away the sin of the world,—and liable to be called upon to suffer, in whatever way, and by whatever means, the Supreme Moral Governor of the universe might require. From the circumstances in which for our sake he voluntarily placed himself, his being born into the world made him necessarily a sufferer, as he thus became bound to satisfy a violated law, and to bear the miseries included in that death which had been denounced as the award of transgression. "He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

II. Jesus possessed the feelings of human nature in a state of holy and exquisite sensibility. Being perfectly free from sin, his feelings were as much unimpaired, as were those of man in his state of innocency. Their purity and liveliness made him more sensible of the dishonour done to God by sin, of its inherent demerit and fearful consequences, and of the misery of living in a world of rebellious and apostate creatures. We little think of this as a source of suffering, but it was continually felt as an addition to the griefs of the man of sorrows. He felt like us, averse from pain, and he accordingly prayed his Father if it were possible to let this cup pass from him. He was affected, therefore, just as we are, both with the view of sufferings, and with the actual endurance of them. His foreknowledge was in this respect only an inlet to sorrow, as it placed within his view all the trials and afflictions which at every step of his course should be laid upon him. The superior sensibility of his mind, connected with his enlargement of knowledge, only exposed him the more to suffering, and gave a poignancy and bitterness to all the evils he endured which we with our dull and dormant sympathies cannot estimate. Hence, the manner in which he was affected by the view of Jerusalem: "When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are

hid from thine eyes!" Hence also the Saviour is represented as saying in the language of prophecy, "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."* In consequence of the peculiar constitution and holy tenderness of his mind, Jesus was highly susceptible of suffering; and we can have no doubt that this cause contributed to his sorrow.

III. The agony in the garden of Gethsemane was mainly occasioned by the sensible experience of the withdrawment of spiritual enjoyment. The subject is deep and mysterious, and no man is competent fully to understand or to explain it. But it is evident from Scripture that this awful privation was included in the curse from which the Saviour undertook to redeem his people: it was the evil to which mankind had become liable since the fall, and to which but for the covenant of mercy they would have been universally and for ever subject. Persons who are declared to be naturally alienated from God, are incapable of forming an adequate judgment of the magnitude of this token of the divine displeasure; but when we reflect, that it implies a sense of the loss of his favour and gracious presence who is the Fountain of blessedness, and a lively apprehension of his wrath, we may have

* Psalms lxxxviii. 15; lxix. 2.

some notion of the extent of this evil. There were circumstances in the case of Jesus which rendered the visitation to him most painful: his nature was perfectly holy; he delighted in holding intimate communion with God; and this intimate communion, and all the comfort and support resulting from it, he had hitherto fully enjoyed. Till now he had been cheered and sustained by the light that shone upon him from heaven, and by the expressions of God's favour and approbation: but those peculiar emanations of light and joy were partially withdrawn, and He then most painfully felt what it was to answer to the divine government for the guilty, and to bear their punishment. It was this chiefly that occasioned the deep agitation, the anguish of spirit, in which he reiterated the prayer, and with increasing earnestness, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:—let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." This prayer was so far answered, that an angel appeared unto him from heaven strengthening him, probably by physical communication of support to his human nature, and probably also by reminding him of the glorious issue of his expiatory sufferings. But I apprehend that the comfortable expressions of God's favour and presence were not restored, and that the dejection and anguish of mind resulting from this privation, and from other causes,

continued while the Saviour was derided and buffetted in the palace of the high-priest, while accused before Pilate, and by that Roman governor condemned, while, faint and weary, he bore his cross to Calvary; that this mental distress was increased when the Saviour was on the cross; that the agony produced by the bereavement alluded to was so great, as to occasion the exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And that he enjoyed not the smiles of his Father till he had said, It is finished, and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

IV. In addition to the sensible loss of the consolations of God's presence, the thoughts of the Saviour seem to have been very much restricted to topics of alarm and terror. The withdrawment of comfort, and the confinement of the mind, to what is distressing and painful, are circumstances, which constitute extreme misery. The Blessed Jesus, while in the garden of Gethsemane, appears to have been in such circumstances, to have had presented to his mind, impressive views of the holiness and justice of God, of the satisfaction due to his offended government and law, and the evil and the odiousness of those sins which he had engaged to expiate. He saw and felt the infinite wrong which had been done to the authority of God by the disobedience of mankind, and the greatness of that expiation which was necessary as an adequate atonement: while, at the same time, he had

such a sense of divine wrath, and the punishment deserved by the sins of men, as overwhelmed his soul, and produced the agony which he experienced. He was bearing the wrath of God; and was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Without the comfort of his Father's presence, his view was fixed, and to an extent inconceivable to us, on what was painful and distressing. His sufferings formed the punishment due to the offences of millions of souls, —a punishment which the God of infinite perfection was now in a mysterious manner inflicting on his own Son, because he stood in our room. The darkness of death enveloped the Redeemer; and it was not till justice was satisfied, the wrath of God appeased, and the law was magnified and made honourable, that the light of consolation and joy penetrated the gloom.

V. In addition to the causes mentioned as occasioning the agony of Gethsemane, I may notice that the Saviour had now a conflict with Satan and his hosts. At a former period, he had been severely tempted by this adversary: but he himself tells us that this was the hour and power of darkness; that is, it was the season in which impenitent men were judicially given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind; in which Providence removed restraints from off their passions; and in which the angels who kept not their first estate were allowed to do their utmost to oppose the Prince of life. The mode in which they conducted

their opposition on the present occasion, we cannot tell; but they doubtless aggravated the sorrow and dejection of the Sufferer, by suggesting thoughts that might lead to despondency, and whatever they might conceive likely to deter him from prosecuting the work he had undertaken. "Nor is it at all improbable, that his great enemy and ours, the prince of darkness, whom he came to overthrow, and with whom he maintained a constant conflict through life, and triumphed over by his death,—should exert his utmost power, by presenting real, or raising up imaginary terrors, to shake the constancy of his soul. These, and a multitude of other agonizing distresses, unknown and inconceivable to us, which might necessarily spring from so vast, so momentous, so stupendous a work, as the salvation of a whole world, made a plain distinction between our Saviour's situation, and that of any other martyr to the cause of truth; and most clearly prove that there never was sorrow in every respect like unto his sorrow."

It was when he was otherwise overwhelmed that these enemies assailed him, tried all their artifices to overcome his fortitude, and added to the poignancy of the multiplied distress of the Man of sorrows. They probably, like their emissaries in the hall of Caiaphas, attacked him with blasphemies, derided his pretensions as a Saviour, ridiculed him in his prophetical,

priestly, and regal offices, and represented his sufferings as furnishing proof of the hopelessness of his enterprise. They thus persecuted him whom God had smitten, and talked to the grief of him whom he had wounded. Is is probably to them, as well as to wicked men, that the Saviour in the language of prophecy refers, when he says, "Many bulls have compassed me about; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me." It was when the Saviour was treading the winepress of Jehovah's wrath alone that the powers and principalities of darkness thus attempted to overwhelm him, and exerted their skill, power, and malignity to a degree corresponding to the magnitude of those interests which they knew were involved in the issue of the conflict. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;" that he might subdue sin, and abolish death: and therefore Satan and his hosts directed their weapons against the Redeemer, and persisted in the contest till the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, triumphed over them in his cross. The conflict was sharp, and almost overwhelming to the Surety of sinful men: but still he was invulnerable,—the prince of this world finding nothing in his heart or in his life by

which he might gain an advantage over him. On the contrary, the Seed of the woman, according to the prediction, bruised the head of the serpent.

Thus we are enabled by considering the agony of our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, clearly to distinguish between the sufferings of a martyr, and those of the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for sin. The very different nature of their sufferings is sufficient to account for the great difference of their feelings under them. Jesus bore the punishment due to our sins,—was himself the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;—and therefore, though the Son of God, the holy, undefiled, and well-beloved of the Father in whom he was well pleased, he was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death:—while his followers, though in themselves unworthy, under the joyful sense of the Divine favour and presence, have been calm and cheerful in the prospect of suffering and of dissolution. It was because they have been relieved by his atoning sacrifice from the burden of sin, that they in these trying circumstances, have rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. They possessed peace under continuous and multiplied afflictions, and with tranquillity and confidence viewed the instruments of torture, and the approach of death by the hand of violence. "I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a

good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." But when we turn to Gethsemane;—we see a just man and perfect—"a man whose conscience reproaches him with no vice or folly—a man whose life hath been piety and love, unaffected piety, disinterested love—a man in whose ample mind are hidden all the treasures of knowledge,—a man assuredly entitled to every comfort which the consciousness of perfection, of perfect virtue and of perfect wisdom, can bestow,—we see this wise, this good, this perfect man, this man in union with Divinity, overwhelmed with grief and tribulation. Surely He bears our griefs, he carries our sorrows, he undergoes the chastisement of our peace."*

* Horsley's Sermons, Serm. xix.

CHAP. XII.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT, CONSIDERED.

THE objections to the doctrine of the Atonement have been noticed incidentally in the preceding chapters. They are, indeed, generally of a character to mislead only the uninformed and the half-instructed: and few, I presume, of those who have been acquainted from their childhood with the Holy Scriptures, are in any great danger of being perverted by the sophistry of Socinianism or of infidelity.

I. It is alleged that atonement is unnecessary in order to the exercise of pardoning mercy. The answer to such allegation when in any case applied to the actual procedure of Heaven is, that we are incompetent to decide absolutely as to what is necessary or unnecessary in the dispensations of the divine government; and that we are especially so in regard to the question, how can sinful men be reconciled to God? Our Almighty Maker, against whom we had sinned, could alone prescribe the grounds on which pardon would be conferred, and the terms on which apostate creatures could, in consistency with what is due to

himself and to his government, be restored to his favour. But I have answered this objection at length in the third chapter of Book IV.

II. It is said, that the doctrine of atonement does violence to all our natural views and impressions of the benevolence of the divine character, as it represents the Deity as implacable. To this often-repeated misrepresentation of the great theme of the gospel, I have already replied, (See Chaps. V. VII. and X.) "The sacrifice of Christ was never deemed by any who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of atonement, to have made God placable, but merely viewed as the means appointed by divine wisdom, through which to bestow forgiveness. And agreeably to this, do we not find this sacrifice every where spoken of, as ordained by God himself? 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Since, then, the notion of the efficiency of the sacrifice of Christ contained in the doctrine of atonement, stands precisely on the same foundation with that of pure intercession,—merely as the means, whereby God has thought fit—to fulfil that merciful intention, which he had at all times entertained towards his fallen creatures: and since, by the same sort of representation, the charge of implacability in the

Divine Being, is as applicable to the one scheme as to the other; that is, since it is a calumny most foully cast upon both: we may estimate, with what candour this has been made, by those who hold the one doctrine, the fundamental ground of their objections against the other."*

The words of our Lord,† in which the doctrine of Atonement is stated, furnish a complete refutation of the objection in question. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." How could language more strongly express the compassion of God to a perishing world? The Almighty God, whose happiness would remain unimpaired though the universe were annihilated, who had only to will the destruction of an apostate race, is here represented as so full of pity, so rich in mercy, as not to allow the infliction of the deserved penalty. Rather than suffer them to be visited with this overwhelming ruin, he devised a plan worthy of his infinite wisdom, by which he may consistently with all the claims of his righteous government avert from them the calamitous consequences of transgression, and transfer them to a Person infinitely dear to Him, who voluntarily undertook to bear them

* Magee, vol. i. p. 23. † John x. 17.

in their room. Those whom he thus loved were, indeed, the intelligent creatures whom he had formed in his own image; but they had revolted from him, had put themselves under the malediction of his law, and had done much, and had cherished more, to provoke the full manifestation of his displeasure. Why not leave them to their merited doom? Why not say concerning them, As they would not hearken to my voice, and would none of me, I give them up to their own hearts' desires, and I abandon them to the bitter experience of the fruits of their doings?

But He is God, and not man; his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. So great is his compassion to sinful men, that in order to spare them he spared not his own Son: to raise them from the depths into which they had fallen, he allowed him, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, to be brought to the suffering of death, even the death of the cross. It was this glorious Being, compared to whom all created things are as nothing, the partaker of his own nature, and who is infinitely dear to him, whom the Father appointed, in the greatness of his mercy, to bear the punishment of our transgression: and he is represented as having regarded him with peculiar delight and complacency, in consideration of his voluntary humiliation and death. Why should the Father have loved him, viewed as Mediator, because of his laying down his

life? Was not this sacrifice accomplished by Jesus with unutterable self-denial? Before it could have been rendered, was it not necessary that he should exchange the abodes of light and purity, for this world of sin and sorrow; the converse of holy and exalted spirits for the society of fallen men; the riches of heaven for the deepest poverty of earth; the form of God for the form of a servant? Was it not necessary that he should submit to sufferings the most excruciating, and be stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted? Notwithstanding the Father loved him, because he laid down his life. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief. Whatever other reasons there were for the delight with which God regarded the Saviour in his humiliation, unquestionably one was, the salvation of many myriads of immortal beings attained by his death; and therefore it strongly proves and illustrates the greatness of the love of God to sinful men. When this love has surmounted such obstacles, and has found out a way for its fullest exercise through a sacrifice so peculiar, what limits can be fixed to its extent, or to the blessings which it designs to bestow? Will it not triumph in the removal of want and misery, in the communication of ineffable blessedness and glory, in raising to a heavenly throne, an immortal crown, and an unfading inheritance, each of the people whom it delights to save and to honour? Their guilt, pollution, and wretchedness, must disappear

before the compassion and power of Him who says concerning them, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness have I drawn you. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

Love so wonderful cannot be paralleled, and cannot be fully conceived. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." As it is not for us to comprehend the boundless satisfaction with which he regarded the Son of his love, veiling his glory, dwelling upon earth in the form of a servant, and in obedience to his will, and from the most disinterested generosity, submitting to misery and death; neither can we comprehend but feebly and inadequately the divine plenitude of compassion which is thus manifested. But as we know that in testimony of God's delight in him, as the Saviour of sinners, he has raised him to the glory which he had with him before the world was, has commanded all men to honour him, all angels to worship him, the whole universe to be put in subjection to him:—has sent in consideration of his humiliation and death the news of pardon and peace to all the tribes and kindreds of an apostate world;—has declared that no man can come to him, or ever enjoy his favour, but through

him:—so are we assured that the benignity of the divine nature is infinite and eternal; that the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but that his kindness shall not depart from his people, and that neither shall the covenant of his peace be dissolved. "God is love."

There is, indeed, no doctrine more prominently presented to our view in the Scriptures than this, that the whole plan of redemption originated in the wisdom and love of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

III. It is argued against the doctrine of atonement that an innocent person cannot justly, nor indeed at all, be substituted in room of the guilty to bear their punishment. Guilt, it is maintained, is personal, and cannot be transferred from one individual to another. Vicarious punishment, it is alleged, is an utter impossibility: and if vicarious suffering do not imply, or amount to the same thing, it is said to be altogether unintelligible.* Even the able and zealous advocate of the doctrine of atonement, Dr. Magee, expresses himself in the following terms; "I have used the expression vicarious import, rather than vicarious, to avoid furnishing any colour to the idle charge, made against the doctrine of atonement, of supposing a real substitution in the room of the offender, and a literal translation of his guilt and

* Balguy on Redemp. p. 66.

punishment to the immolated victim; a thing utterly incomprehensible, as neither guilt nor punishment can be conceived, but with reference to consciousness, which cannot be transferred.—The idea of punishment cannot be abstracted from that of guilt: and in this respect I differ from many respectable authorities, and even from Dr. Blayney, who uses the word punishment in his translation. But it is evident, that it is notwithstanding a judicial infliction; and it may perhaps be figuratively denominated punishment; if thereby be implied a reference to the actual transgressor, and be understood that suffering which was due to the offender himself; and which, if inflicted on him, would then take the name of punishment. In no other sense can the suffering inflicted on one on account of the transgressions of another, be called a punishment; and, in this light, the bearing the punishment of another's sins, is to be understood as bearing that, which in relation to the sins, and to the sinner, admits the name of punishment, but with respect to the individual on whom it is actually inflicted, abstractedly considered, can be viewed but in the light of suffering. Thus the expression may fairly be explained: it is, however, upon the whole to be wished, that the word punishment had not been used. The meaning is substantially the same without it; and the adoption of it has furnished the principal ground of cavil, to the adversaries of the doctrine of atonement, who affect to consider the word as applied

in its strict signification, and consequently as implying the transfer of actual guilt."*

On the supposition that this statement of Dr. Magee is correct, that is, that there can be no real substitution in the room of the offender, and a literal translation of his guilt and punishment to the immolated victim, then to speak of a symbolical translation of sins,—or of emblematic transfer of guilt, as Dr. Magee does, in the case of the sacrifices, must be absolute nonsense, as there is no reality to which that symbol or emblem can refer. "If every figure presupposes reality, and if there be no reality, no literal transfer of guilt, there is not in Euclid an axiom more clear than that Dr. Magee's interpretation of the imposition of hands must be false; for, upon that principle, it is a thing utterly incomprehensible that there can exist even a symbolical transfer of guilt."†

That consciousness of guilt cannot be transferred to an innocent person, is intuitively evident, and absolutely certain. Who ever supposed that it could? But that guilt, meaning by that term legal answerableness, and not personal blameworthiness, may be removed from the actual offender to an approved substitute, is a proposition which is so far from being incomprehensible, that it is perfectly intelligible and accords with the analogy of the moral world. If, however, legal responsibility may, in certain circumstances, be transfer-

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 352; vol. ii. p. 52.
† Nicol, p. 100.

red from the actual offender to another person, the legal penalty or punishment annexed to the offence, may also be transferred. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that the substitute can have the consciousness of his having committed the sin, or of his having personally deserved the punishment, and he is, therefore, incapable of suffering from remorse; but he may have the liveliest perception of the evil and odiousness of the offence, that the punishment is perfectly just, that he has voluntarily consented to bear it, and that he had an unquestionable right to do so. What more is requisite to fit him for becoming the real substitute of the transgressor, and for rendering in his room the satisfaction which the violated law demands?

This, notwithstanding the expressions quoted above, is substantially the doctrine which Dr. Magee so ably and so unanswerably advocates in his work on the atonement. "To be exposed," says he, "to suffering, in consequence of another's guilt; and thereby, at the same time, to represent the offender, and to release him from the punishment due to his transgression, involves no contradiction whatever."* The substitute, in fact, bears the judicial infliction, or the punishment due to the guilt of the offender; and he bears this punishment in his room, and for his deliverance.

There is, in truth, not a more striking feature in that providential system by which the world is governed

* Vol. i. p. 352.

than the communication of benefits by means of vicarious agency and suffering. The blessings of civil and religious freedom enjoyed in these lands were procured by the sufferings of our forefathers. The Apostles who, by their pre-eminence in afflictions and distresses, were made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men, have been instrumental in conveying blessings to the end of time. Blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are given to some in consequence of the intercession of others on their behalf. Such examples clearly prove that the mediatorial scheme of redemption is in some respects, at least, analogous to the procedure of God in the government of the world.

But it will be said, perhaps, that the analogy fails at a certain point of the comparison: since the main question is, not whether mankind derive benefits in consequence of the sufferings of Christ,—for this is a position which many who do not believe in the divine authority of christianity most freely admit;—but whether those sufferings were borne in their room, and judicially inflicted by the Supreme Moral Governor, as the penalty of their transgressions?

The case, it must be admitted, is, when viewed in all its bearings, unparalleled. The crucifixion of the Lord of glory, when he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, was the accomplishment of a plan which the Apostle affirms was so peculiar as not to have its complete prefiguration or

resemblance in any thing which comes within the reach of human observation. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."*

Yet, the substitution of Christ in the room of sinful men, to bear the penalty of their transgression, so as to release them from punishment, is, as I formerly shewed,† perfectly accordant with the principles of equity. I shall not here repeat what I have already advanced in proof of this position. The propitiation of Christ is, indeed, the most glorious manifestation of the perfection of the divine character,—as the just God and the Saviour:—righteous in punishing transgression, and yet, in full consistency with his justice, exercising his abundant mercy in its pardon. The unsearchable wisdom of God here exhibits a plan of redeeming mercy which admirably meets the moral ruin, the wide-spreading wretchedness, of millions of intelligent beings, who had destroyed themselves, and in whom there was no help.

"That God in human nature should himself become the victim, is a scheme which indeed outstrips all anti-

* 1 Cor. ii. 6—10. † Chap. vi.

cipation, and baffles the utmost stretch of our minds when we labour to form an idea of perfect benevolence and perfect holiness; but yet it is the only scheme which can fully meet the double object of strongly attracting our love to God, and, at the same time, of deeply convincing us of the danger, baseness, and ingratitude of sin. This gives us a measure by which we may estimate both the divine goodness and our own guilt. It is, indeed, an exhibition of love which passeth knowledge. The surpassing kindness and tenderness demonstrated in the Cross of Christ, when understood and believed, must sweep away all doubts and fears with regard to God's disposition towards us. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Objections similar to that which I am now considering may be brought against the theories of those who deny the atonement. For, according to their scheme, Christ, an innocent Person, was a sufferer: and may we not ask, how does it appear consistent with the divine rectitude, to will the sufferings of an innocent and righteous Person? If they answer,—because there were weighty reasons, and important ends in view:—we also say, that there were weighty reasons, and important ends in view in regard to the substitution of Christ as an atoning victim in room of sinful men. The ends to be accomplished by it are, in magni-

tude, far above the conceptions of created intelligences: "which things the angels desire to look into."*

IV. It is further urged as an objection against the atonement, that there is no discoverable connexion between the sufferings of one Being and the forgiveness of another. Admitting this to be the case, the doctrine of atonement only resembles in this respect all philosophical truth: and of course this objection cannot be adduced by a philosopher.† We are taught the imperfection of the human understanding by its incapacity to comprehend things with which we are most familiar. Are not the causes of the phenomena of matter and of mind hid from our view in impenetrable darkness? Can we tell the nature of that connexion which exists between the mind and the organs of speech which are the vehicle of its intelligence? The persevering inquiries which have been carried on during three thousand years by men of cultivated and powerful minds, serve to shew the weakness of the human understanding, and that there is a limit beyond which its researches are fruitless. Nor does this imperfection of our reason furnish any just ground of complaint; since it is a necessary characteristic of our nature and circumstances as dependent creatures;—creatures who occupy an infe-

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

† See Hume's Essays, Ep. vii.; Stewart's Elements, &c. vol. i. p. 549; Dewar's Disc. Inter. Evid. p. 204.

rior place in the scale of intelligent beings. Powers have been conferred on us by our Creator suited to the station in which he has placed us; nor ought inability to comprehend all things be any cause of repining or of dissatisfaction.

We have the most ample reasons for believing that the atonement effected by the substitution and death of the Son of God, is altogether worthy of the character and government of Him by whom it has been provided; and divinely suited to the wants and circumstances of fallen humanity. Its efficacy as the source of peace, an excitement to holiness, and a sure foundation of hope, has been tried by the test of experience in innumerable instances; and it has never failed. The saying rests on the authority of God, and is therefore alike faithful and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Our duty is humbly and thankfully to acquiesce in this divinely revealed method of salvation; and sensible of our deserts to accept of the grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

V. It is further alleged that the doctrine of atonement was scarcely alluded to by our Lord during his personal ministry; and the inference intended to be deduced is, that the sacrificial terms used in the Epistles are to be understood figuratively. The answer to this objection is,

I. That it rests upon a false assumption. It is not

consistent with truth to say, that we do not find in the discourses of our Lord recorded in the gospels any trace of the doctrine of atonement. In the exordium of the Gospel by Matthew we read, that the Angel declared to Joseph, that his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins: in that of the Gospel by John, he is proclaimed to be the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. Our Lord himself declared that he came to give his life a ransom for many: and in regard to the wine used in the last supper, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. In these passages the doctrine of atonement is clearly and fully taught. When we add to them that in which our Lord shews the necessity of his sufferings in order that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations,* we have presented to our view in the most definite language the sacrificial nature of the death of Christ.

II. Our Lord himself assigns the reason why the doctrine of atonement is not so fully explained, and so frequently insisted on, in his discourses, as in the epistolary part of the New Testament. In anticipation of his death and ascension into heaven, he said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you unto all

* Luke xxiv. 44—49.

truth:—and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you."*

These declarations of our Lord evidently signify, that the fuller exposition of the christian scheme, the completion of his design in the revelation of divine truth, was reserved for the ministry of his Apostles. The promise of an infallible Instructor to preserve them from error, and to lead them into all truth, had a reference to the whole discharge of their official duty;—the correct narration of facts of which the gospels chiefly consist, and the unerring statement of the doctrines grounded upon them, and arising out of them, contained in the Epistles. The doctrines, therefore, which the Apostles taught rest on the same divine authority with those which were announced by our Lord during his personal ministry.

At the same time, we are to guard against the unfounded supposition that the doctrines developed in the Epistles are never noticed in the gospels. This is so far from being true, that I know not a single principle which is stated in the Epistolary part of the New Testament, which is not contained in the historical. Nor is there any doctrine promulgated in either which was not made known, though obscurely, under the veil of types and shadows, or by prophetic announcements, during former dispensations. The sum of the apostolic

* John xvi. 12—16.

ministry, as we are informed by the highest authority, consisted in witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles. The entire harmony which thus subsists between the statements of the different penmen of divine revelation, who possessed the most varied genius and talents, and some of whom lived at the distance of many ages from each other, furnishes the most convincing proof that the whole proceeds from the same Omniscient and Almighty Spirit.

There was then a manifest propriety in deferring the full development of the christian scheme, until it was proved by his resurrection that Jesus was in reality what he had claimed to be, the Son of God, and the promised Messiah. "To gain assent to plain facts, was found a sufficient trial for the incredulity, and rooted prejudices of the Jews, in the first instance. Besides, it should be observed, that the discourses of our Lord and his Apostles, were generally addressed to persons, to whom the ideas of atonement were familiar, whereas the epistles were directed to those who were not acquainted with the principles of the Mosaic atonement; excepting only that addressed to the Hebrews, in which, the writer solely endeavours to prove the death of Christ, to fall in with those

notions of atonement, which were already familiar to the persons whom he addressed."

VI. It is urged as an objection against the atonement, that the Scriptures speak slightingly of sacrifice, and give a decided preference to obedience. It is true, that when sacrifices were offered in hypocrisy, when they were rested on as the whole of religion, when they were substituted in room of moral duties, and were presented in any other than the proper place and season,—God speaks of them as unacceptable services. Though appointed by himself, they were, when offered in these circumstances, and with these dispositions, viewed by him with displeasure: just as the divinely instituted ordinances of the christian church, when observed, in order the more effectually to conceal from man the wickedness of the heart and life, or to compensate for the neglect of known and commanded duties, are displeasing to God.

It is in this light we are to regard the following expressions which seem to imply the rejection of sacrifice. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams.—For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the

multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil: learn to do well: seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.—Unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth.—I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.—But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."*

* 1 Sam. xv. 22; Hos. vi. 6; Isa. i. 10—17; Psalm l. 16—end; Amos v. 21; Jerem. vii. 21—23.

The professed worship of persons who live in the habitual practice of sin, and who observe the external forms of religion as a cover for their wickedness is, and ever must be, an abomination in the sight of God.

VII. The enemies of the Atonement allege that under the Law expiation was made, not for moral, but for ceremonial offences; and this position they make the basis of an argument against the Atonement. But I have shewn (see Book I. chap. vi. § 4.) that this position is totally unfounded. I shall only further remark on this point, that in our investigations of the peculiarities of the Mosaic Dispensation, we should bear in mind, that the Jewish polity was a theocracy; that Jehovah was at once the temporal Sovereign and the God of his chosen people; and that "it would follow, that moral transgressions, which under one aspect, might be atoned for by piacular sacrifice, under another aspect, would be incapable of admitting any atonement. This obvious distinction, which resulted from the theocratic polity of Israel, is, in reality, founded upon the very necessity of things themselves. If the murderer by making a sacrificial atonement for his offence, could thereby escape the due punishment of the civil law: it is plain, that the whole frame of society would be unhinged. Hence, under the civil law of Israel, no such atonement could be accepted. Punishment followed, as a matter of course; nor could any piacular sacrifice exempt the offender from its operation,

But though atonement could not be made in the earthly court of the king of Israel; we must not too hastily conclude, that therefore it could not be made in the heavenly court of the God of Israel. Here, if I mistake not, the matter still continued on the same footing, as it stood during the period of the patriarchal Dispensation.—But under neither Dispensation, nor yet (we may add) even under the Christian Dispensation, could any piacular sacrifice, even the blessed piacular sacrifice of our Lord himself, so atone for moral offences, as to exempt the offender from that punishment which the statute law of the land awarded to him in a court of judicature."*

VIII. It is alleged that the Scripture doctrine of atonement is inconsistent with the modern opinion of the magnitude of the creation. On the supposition that this opinion is well-founded, it is thought to be incredible that Deity should become incarnate, should take human nature into the most intimate union with himself, and thus raise it to such exalted dignity in the scale of being.

Mr. Fuller, in his work on Deism, and Dr. Chalmers, in his Astronomical Discourses, have shewn, with great talent and eloquence, that there is nothing in the Scripture doctrine of atonement which is inconsistent with the modern opinion of the magnitude of the creation: but that, on the contrary, this doctrine is

* Faber's Inquiry, &c. p. 329.

strengthened and aggrandised by the supposed extent of the universe.

IX. It is further alleged, that the obedience, the prayers, and the praises of Christians are called sacrifices; (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Pet. ii; Heb. xiii. 15.) and that therefore nothing higher may be meant by the language of the New Testament concerning the death of Christ. This objection is so very feeble that I scarcely need say any thing in refutation of it. It is because Christ has sanctified his people with his own blood that their persons and services are accepted of God: and they are figuratively called priests, because of the free and uninterrupted access which they have to God through their Great High-Priest. Hence their obedience and devotions are styled sacrifices. These are the expressions of their devotedness to God.—There is, besides, in the instances alluded to a reference to the thank-offerings among the Hebrews.—As the office of priesthood implied the offering up of sacrifice; and as the priests, under the Law, really presented sacrifice to God; so believers, under the New Testament, being made priests unto God in a spiritual and metaphorical sense, their sacrifices also are spiritual and metaphorical.*

* See Owen on Heb. vol. ii. p. 19.

BOOK IV.

THE REASONABLENESS, NECESSITY, AND PRACTICAL TENDENCY OF THE ATONEMENT.

CHAP. I.

THE ATONEMENT ACCORDANT WITH THE MORAL FEELINGS OF MAN.

THE doctrine of the atonement, which is the leading theme of divine revelation, comes to us recommended by its perfect consistency with the truth of things; and with the actual condition of mankind in every age of the world. Though not discoverable by human reason; and though we are not capable of comprehending it in all its remote bearings and consequences, the principle of substitution essentially involved in it, is quite familiar to mankind. The doctrine is in itself most reasonable; for it is suited to the views and to the nature of man; and worthy of the character and government of God.

I. It is accordant with the views, feelings, and wants of man. This position is perfectly consistent with the opinion, that the doctrine of expiation by

sacrifice, is not the discovery of reason, but was originally made known by divine revelation. With regard to the sacrifice of the Son of God in room of sinful men, it is obvious, that the knowledge of it could only be attained by an express communication from heaven. But though it be a doctrine of divine revelation, it approves itself to the understanding of man, and its reasonableness may be most satisfactorily established.

1. The doctrine of substitution and vicarious suffering is familiar to mankind in all ages. It is taught to them by the constitution of the world, and by the circumstances in which, in consequence of this constitution, they are placed. God commands, by the law of nature, that they afford others assistance, in many cases where they cannot do it without very great pains, and labour, and sufferings to themselves. And we see in what variety of ways, one person's sufferings contribute to the relief of another: and how, or by what particular means, this comes to pass, or follows, from the constitution and laws of nature, which come under our notice: so that any objection founded on this principle against christianity may be equally adduced against the whole general constitution of nature. Nay, if there were any force at all in the objection, it would be stronger, in one respect, against natural providence than against christianity: because, under the former, we are in many cases commanded, and even necessitated, whether we will or no, to suffer for the

faults of others; whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary.*

That the idea of substitution and of vicarious suffering is not opposed to our natural notion of things, may be shewn by varied illustration. "If any person greatly obliged to me, who was dependent on me, and whom I loved, should exceedingly abuse me, and should go on in an obstinate course of it from one year to another, notwithstanding all I could say to him, and all new obligations continually repeated:—if another person, a very dear friend to me, and one that had always been true to me, and constant to the utmost, and that was a very near relation of him that offended me, should intercede for him, and out of the entire love he had to him, should put himself to very hard labours and difficulties, and undergo great pains and miseries to procure him forgiveness; and the person that offended should, with a changed mind, fly to this mediator, and should seek favour in his name, with a sense in his own mind how much his mediator had done and suffered for him. I should be satisfied, and feel myself inclined, without any difficulty, to receive him into my entire friendship again; but not without the last-mentioned condition, that he should be sensible how much his mediator had done and suffered. Abigail, when mediating between David and Nabal, when the former was provoked to wrath against the latter, and

* Butler's Analogy, p. 2, chap. v.

had determined to destroy him, fell at David's feet, and said, 'Upon me let this iniquity be, and let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thy audience.' By this it appears, that a mediator putting himself in the stead of the offender, so that the offended party should impute the offence to him, and look on the mediator as having taken it upon him, looking on him as the debtor for what satisfaction should be required and expected, was in those days no strange notion, or considered as a thing in itself absurd and inconsistent with men's natural notion of things."*

When we consider the infinite greatness and glorious majesty of God; the honour which is due to the righteous and sovereign Ruler of the world; and that the maintenance of this honour is essential to the preservation of the order and happiness of the universe, how important, how necessary, how reasonable does the scheme of redemption appear, according to which sinful men are restored to the divine favour only by the substitution and vicarious suffering of the Son of God?

2. It is perfectly consistent with reason and with the natural sentiments of mankind that important benefits should be conferred on the unworthy, when they are closely related to persons of distinguished merit and worth. Does it not seem fit and right that when a person of the greatest excellency is united to the undeserving, his merit should be regarded as a ground

* Edward's Works, vol. viii. p. 514.

or reason on account of which some favour should be shewn to those in alliance with him? The Mediator between God and man is united to both:—united to God, he possesses his nature, is the same in substance, and equal in power and in glory:—united to man, he is one with him, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, though free from sin. By taking upon himself the nature of man, and thus uniting himself to a rebel against God, who was exposed to his wrath, and under the righteous condemnation of his law, he undertook to reconcile him to God by bearing his sufferings. He shewed the marvellous extent of his kindness to sinners; but he shewed at the same time his abhorrence of sin, and his determination to maintain, even by the sacrifice of himself, the honours of the divine law and government inviolate. Is it not conformable to the dictates of the most enlightened reason, and to the moral sentiments of mankind, that God should have such respect to the sacrifice of his Son, offered on behalf of sinful men, as freely to pardon them for its sake? Especially, when it is considered, that while this sacrifice was offered voluntarily, it was also offered in obedience to the command of God, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Is there not thus provided a most fit and reasonable ground on account of which to extend forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life to all who receive these blessings?

" Though there are some benefits of such a nature, that no means can obtain them for beings who have not certain qualifications, there are other benefits which one being may obtain for another, or for which he may be indebted entirely to the kind offices of his fellow-creatures. An advantage may become proper to be granted to another, in consequence of some circumstances he may be in, or some relations in which he may stand to others, which abstracted from such circumstances and relations, would not have been proper. Nothing more frequently happens in the common course of events.

" The whole scheme of nature seems, indeed, to be contrived on purpose in such a manner, as that beings might have it in their power, in numberless ways, to bless one another. And one great end of the precarious and mutually dependent condition of men, appears plainly to be, that they might have room and scope for the exercise of the beneficent affections. From this constitution of things, it is, that almost all our happiness is conveyed to us, not immediately from the hands of God, but by the instrumentality of our fellow-beings, or through them as the channels of his beneficence, in such a sense, that had it not been for their benevolence and voluntary agency, we should have for ever wanted the blessings we enjoy."*

The distinguished writer from whose work on the

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 142.

Atonement this quotation is made, adduces a number of instances from the Old Testament, to show, that the granting of the divine forgiveness through a Mediator or Intercessor, is a principle recognised in God's dealings with his creatures. When God had declared, that he would destroy the entire nation of Israel, for their idolatry at Horeb, and again for their intended violence against Caleb and Joshua, he is said to have forgiven them in consequence of the intercession of Moses. In like manner, for the sake of ten righteous persons, he would have spared Sodom. In remembrance of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and for their sakes, he is represented as being merciful to their posterity. He forgave Abimelech also upon the prayer of Abraham, and the friends of Job, upon the solicitation of that patriarch, and, what renders these two instances particularly strong, is, that whilst he declares the purpose of forgiveness, he at the same time expressly prescribes the mediation, by which it was to be obtained.

3. The notion of the expiatory efficacy of sacrifice has been universal. This cannot be doubted by any who are conversant with the writings of the Greeks and Romans; or with the notices transmitted to us of the religious rites of other ancient nations. They all believed, that the displeasure of the offended Deity was to be averted by the sacrifice of an animal; and that to the shedding of its blood was to be imputed

their pardon and reconciliation. This was the judgment of mankind in all ages, expressed by the continued use of sacrifices the most valuable, offered to expiate human guilt, and to propitiate the favour of the Deity. Though the original institution of sacrifice was of divine appointment, the observance of this rite by all nations, amid their different degrees of civilization and barbarism, of knowledge and ignorance, for the purpose of averting the anger of the offended Deity, was a proof of the consciousness of their guilt, and a recognition of the necessity of an atonement. It demonstrably shows, that mankind were sensible of their having sinned against God, of their having deserved punishment, and that they could be re-instated in the divine favour only by propitiatory sacrifice.

"Thus, in the earliest ages of mankind, while the impressions of primitive tradition, though so lamentably misapplied, and associated with the characteristic ferocity of polytheism, were not yet abraded by philosophy and civilization,—thus strongly and universally did men recognise that their crimes insured the vengeance of superior powers, except its course was stayed by the atonement of sacrifices, often in a high degree difficult, costly, and terrific."*

The offering of human sacrifices, which appears to have been general over the pagan world, "is a deci-

* Smith on the Sacrifice, &c. of Christ, p. 235. See also Magee, No. V. xxxiii. and lvii.

sive proof of the light in which the human mind, unaided by revelation, is disposed to view the Divinity; and clearly evinces, how little likelihood there is in the supposition, that unassisted reason could discover the sufficiency of repentance, to regain the favour of an offended God." That this practice prevailed among the Britons, Germans, and Gauls, we are assured by the testimonies of Cæsar and Tacitus. "Pro vita hominis, nisi vita hominis reddatur, non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari, arbitrantur."* "The Ethiopians were required by their laws to sacrifice boys to the sun, and girls to the moon. Among the Phenicians, it was customary in great and public calamities, for princes and magistrates to offer up in sacrifice to the avenging demons, the dearest of their offspring. Herodotus describes it as a custom with the Scythians, to sacrifice every hundredth man of their prisoners to their god Mars. And Keysler, who has carefully investigated the antiquities of that race, represents the spreading oaks, under which they were used to perform their sanguinary rites, as being always profusely sprinkled with the blood of the expiring victims." This cruel practice prevailed among the Egyptians, the Chinese, and the Persians. The sacred rites of the latter, like those of other nations, were stained with the blood of immolated victims, as may be seen in Herodotus, lib. i. cap. 132. and lib. vii.

* Cæsar de bello Gal. lib. 6.

cap. 113. The code of Brahma enjoined the offering of human victims.*

We find also human sacrifices attributed to the Thebans, Corinthians, Messenians, and Temessenses, by Pausanias, to the Lacedemonians by Fulgentius, Theodoret, and Appollodunis; and to the Athenians by Plutarch: and it is notorious that the Athenians, as well as the Massilians, had a custom of sacrificing a man every year, after loading him with dreadful curses, that the wrath of the gods might fall upon his head, and be turned away from the rest of the citizens. The practice prevailed also among the Romans, as appears, from the express testimonies of Livy, Plutarch, and Pliny:—so late even as the reign of Trojan, three vestal virgins having been punished for incontinence, the Pontiffs, on consulting the books of the Sibyls to know if a sufficient atonement had been made, and finding that the offended Deity continued incensed, ordered two men and two women, Greeks and Gauls, to be buried alive.—The same cruel mode of appeasing their offended gods, we find ascribed to all the other Heathen nations.†

From this enumeration of facts, it seems not difficult to decide, whether the dictate of untutored reason, be the conviction of the *divine benevolence*, and the per-

* Asiat. Res. vol. i. p. 265.

† See the very valuable Dissertation in Magee's Work on the Atonement already referred to.

suasion that the Supreme Being is to be conciliated, by good and virtuous conduct *alone:* and from this also we shall be enabled to judge, what degree of credit is due to the assertions of those who pronounce, that "all men naturally apprehend the Deity to be propitious: that no nation whatever, either Jew or Heathen, ancient or modern, appears to have had the least knowledge, or to betray the least sense of their want, of any expedient of satisfaction for sin, besides repentance and a good life."

The history of mankind, on the contrary, warrants us to reverse this language, and to assert, that no nation, ancient or modern, appears to have been destitute of the notion, that expiatory sacrifice is required to appease the Deity, and to regain his favour.

"The Heathens themselves had their sacrifices. They had sinfully lost the tradition of the true religion and the Messiah, handed down from Noah; yet Providence ordered it so that they did not wholly lose the rite of sacrificing. There is reason to acknowledge a particular Providence preserving tradition in this point: for how otherwise could it enter into men's heads, to serve their gods by sacrificing their beasts? It was useful that the world should not be entirely unacquainted with the notion of a sacrifice. The substitution of the innocent in the room of the guilty, all pointed towards this great oblation which was to make all others to cease."*

* MacLaurin's Works, vol. i. p. 99.

4. The doctrine of the atonement is admirably calculated to relieve the fears, conciliate the affections, and to attain the moral improvement of man. This topic, to which I have elsewhere alluded, presents a wide field for our contemplation. It is unnecessary at present to do more than suggest a few observations.

The fact that all mankind are in a fallen and sinful condition, is universally admitted. All acknowledge, even if they do not sensibly feel, that they have sinned and come short of the glory of God. To the person who is tenderly alive to the import of this acknowledgment, to the relation in which as a sinner he stands to a holy God, and who is deeply concerned to regain the divine favour, the atonement made by the Son of God, presents the relief which he requires,—relief which approves itself to his understanding as the wisdom of God and the power of God. Can he require more to pacify his conscience, and to fill him with joy and peace in believing, than God has required to satisfy his justice, and to manifest the glory of his moral government, in the forgiveness of sin? However vivid may be his impressions of the infinite evil and demerit of sin, and of the holiness of God, he may be relieved from the burden of guilt, by an application to the expiatory sacrifice offered to take away the sins of the world. If the evil which he deplores be great and even boundless, the atonement made by the Son of God for its removal has an infinite value. If the wages of sin is

death, was not that penalty fully paid in the glorious person of our Divine Substitute? The worth of the ransom is transcendently great, as is the excellency of Him who gave it; and the perfection of the righteousness wrought out by "God manifest in the flesh," commensurate as it is with all the requirements of the divine authority and law, forms a sure ground of hope to all who by faith receive it.

Than this, what can the anxieties of the truly penitent and contrite demand more? Does not the atonement exibit the wisdom, and righteousness, love and mercy of God, gloriously combined for the salvation of man? Is there any thing wanting to the nature and quality of the Sacrifice which has been offered, and the reconciliation which has been effected? Could the obedience of Angels, or of all created beings, reflect such glory on the authority and law of God, as that of Him who though in the form of God, assumed the form of a servant? When it is thus manifestly shewn that God is for us, may we not confidently ask, who can be against us? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

I see in the infinitely valuable and efficacious atonement of the Cross, a remedy that is ample as the measure of my guilt,—that is divinely adapted to the varying aspects of my misery and helplessness,—and which, in my saddest hour, brings to my heart its

healing and tranquillizing balm. I know that the hope to which it has raised me is not visionary, for I observe in it the harmony and the manifestation of the divine perfections; and feeling from my personal experience, that it possesses all the efficacy which the New Testament ascribes to it, I confidently regard it as a wonderful expedient of God's devising, and give to it all the deference, and all the love due to the only way under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Deeply mysterious though it be, I can trace its connexion with the whole process of my recovery from guilt and apostasy, and restoration to holiness and happiness. It forms the fountain which has been opened to wash from sin and uncleanness.

CHAP. II.

THE ATONEMENT ACCORDANT WITH OUR VIEWS OF THE PERFECTIONS AND CHARACTER OF GOD.

THE Atonement appears in every respect worthy of the character and moral government of God. We know so little of God, that it may be alleged, we are incompetent to judge as to what is worthy of Him. It may be supposed, that the whole subject is elevated so far above our understanding that we are incapable of reasoning as to its suitableness to the divine attributes. Nor will it be denied, that if we suffer ourselves to think, that we are in every way qualified to decide what are the truths which it is fit for God to reveal, and what it is worthy of human reason to receive, we invest our fallible judgment with an authority to which it is inadequate, and for the exercise of which it never was designed. In assuming such high prerogative should we not act on the supposition that the range of our knowledge is infinite; that we perfectly understand all the maladies of our moral nature, and can ascertain, and fully comprehend, the means which should be employed for their removal?

But though in such investigations we should proceed

with humility, remembering that the doctrines peculiar to divine revelation were not discoverable by human reason, and cannot be fully comprehended by the human mind, we are not therefore prevented from exercising our reason upon them, and from clearly perceiving that they are most worthy of the character and government of God. We are absolutely certain that God cannot deny himself, that he cannot do what is opposed to his righteousness, goodness, and truth; and that therefore a supposed revelation which contained clear immoralities or contradictions, would be proved to be false.

Though without the light of divine revelation we could not have answered the inquiry, what are the requisites necessary to accomplish the deliverance of men from the consequences of their apostasy from God, we may with this divine revelation in our possession maintain that reason demands in order to attain the end proposed, that the honour of the government and law of God should be preserved inviolate, while the natural and necessary consequences of sin should be prevented from ensuing. As the justice and veracity of God require that the punishment which sin deserves should be inflicted, no plan is admissible that would propose a remission of the offence in any way derogatory to the divine authority and perfections. The law of God is the expression of his will, announcing not what may be, as the result of arbitrary enactment,

but what necessarily shall be, that which is obligatory in the nature of things; and the penalty incurred by its violation must therefore be executed on the offender, or on the person of an adequate Surety admitted by the Supreme Lawgiver in his room. The unalienable right of God to impose such a law as the rule of his intelligent creatures, none can deny. To this law a penalty was annexed in case of transgression: its infliction does not arise from arbitrary principles, from the exercise of principles which might be either acted upon or not, by a Being of infinite holiness, but from essential justice and equity, which cannot be deviated from without a deviation from perfection.

Let us now observe how fully the justice of God has been honoured by the atonement of Christ; and how perfectly its claims are maintained in connexion with the salvation of man.

When man had transgressed the law, and had incurred its penalty, how could he be delivered from the punishment to which he became liable? Was it by abrogating the law? That was impossible; since it can no more be changed than the nature and perfection of God. The mercy of God was boundless, and disposed him to pity and forgive the creatures that had been formed in his likeness, but who had fallen from innocency, and who had rebelled against him. But his compassion was restrained in its exercise till a method should be discovered by which his justice

might be displayed as well as his mercy in the forgiveness of sin. In this condition, what created wisdom or power could bring deliverance? Was it befitting, or was it possible, that the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of all should pass by the wilful and repeated violation of his law, without shewing in the most unequivocal manner his abhorrence of sin, or, without vindicating his righteousness by the punishment of the sinner? Could sin, so hateful to God, so replete with evil, and tending to the disorder and misery of the universe, be pardoned without such an atonement as would manifest the justice of God?

This atonement was made by the Son of God: the law and government of God were magnified and made honourable by the obedience and suffering of this Divine person,—the righteousness of God was displayed by his inflicting upon him the suffering due to us;—his love by the bestowment of so transcendent a gift;—his wisdom, in taking occasion from the introduction of sin to manifest the divine character in new and still more glorious aspects;—his power in overcoming our enemies, and in making a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross. The Redeemer removed the veil with which sin had intercepted the glory of the divine character from the eyes of intelligent beings, and has manifested this glory in its resplendent purity and brightness. In the atonement the holiness and justice of God are more fully

shewn than they could have been in the punishment of sinners; and yet his mercy and love are amply attested. The Lord and Ruler of the universe is presented to our view as a consuming fire, the eternal irreconcilable enemy of sin, and, at the same time, as the God of peace, reconciling the world unto himself. He is here seen to be the just God and the Saviour, full of love to a perishing world, but so full of regard to his own glory as to open up a path for the communication of his mercy through the sacrifice and death of his Son. "Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood for a demonstration of his justice in the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

But while the atonement thus exhibits his infinite purity and righteousness, it is an impressive manifestation of the goodness, of God. It is represented in Scripture as the great decisive evidence of the grace and kindness of God. "Herein was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

How lovely is the view which is here given to us of the divine character! How forcible is the motive which it suggests to the practice of holiness! It urges us by the mercies of God, to present our bodies

a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service:—to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, forasmuch as we know, that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. It reminds us of the wondrous means by which we are saved, as well as of the infinite value of the blessings of salvation; and it entreats us by the love of Christ, to persevere in all holy obedience.

Further: in connexion with the purity and loveliness of the divine character, the atonement shews in the strongest manner the unalterable authority and obligation of the law of God. It furnishes a striking exposition of the purity, unbending strictness, and immutability of the law which requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. The whole scheme of redeeming mercy by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ proceeds upon the principle that the law cannot in a single instance be violated with impunity;—that its commands, denunciations, and threatened penalty are all righteous;—and that in executing its awful sentence, God acts, not with undue severity, but in perfect justice. The Cross presents us with a comment on the declaration of our Lord, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise

pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." It exhibits the law of God as holy, just, and good; as the expression of his will who can do no iniquity, who never can require more than is right; as the measure and rule of that obedience which the nature of God and man make necessary the one from the other; as the standard and directory of the extent of that love and service which are due from us to God. The death of Christ loudly attests that this divine law can no more be relaxed or changed, than can the moral character of that God, the image of whose wisdom, truth, rectitude, and goodness it is. It proclaims it to be the enactment of Him who sees the end from the beginning, by whose wisdom and goodness it has been framed, and who through this medium reflects the image of his intelligence to the understandings and the hearts of the subjects of his moral government.

Thus does the atonement most amply confirm the previous dictates of enlightened reason as to the unchangeableness of the law of God. It could not be altered for the better, because it is the image of Him who is perfection, that which his wisdom and goodness affirm to be due from man to God, from man to his neighbour, from man to himself, as a moral agent and an immortal being. If any change were to be effected on the law, it must be a change for the worse; and then, it would of course cease to be what it is, the law of the Lord which is perfect, the very expression of

those moral excellencies which he loves, and of those obligations which are unalterable and eternal. Unless it be a true expression of those moral excellencies, and of those obligations, it is a false representation of what God is, of what God is entitled to receive, of what he requires: such a representation cannot of course proceed from the God of truth, whose wisdom, holiness and wisdom, are infinite and eternal.

But every scheme that has ever been devised by man for obtaining forgiveness from God, on grounds apart from the atonement, does proceed, and must of necessity proceed, on the principle that the divine law is, "relaxed in its strictness, mitigated in its requirements, and satisfied with a partial and imperfect obedience." Every such scheme, therefore, will be found to rest on a false foundation, to be dishonouring to the wisdom and goodness of God, to have a direct tendency to diminish, if not utterly to eradicate from the heart, the reverence which ought to be cherished for the law; to be favourable to the deceitful and self-partiality which is natural to man, and to be subversive of the interests of morals.

Finally, the atonement made by the death of the Son of God, exhibits in the strongest possible manner the divine estimation of the evil and demerit of sin. It is an awful demonstration of God's abhorrence of sin, and of his fixed determination to punish it. There are two points of view in which its evil may be considered:

—as a dishonour to God: and as subversive of the excellency and happiness of his creatures. In both these respects it is an evil; though infinitely greater in the former than in the latter, because God is infinitely greater and more excellent than any or than all of his creatures. Sin is rebellion against his authority, opposition to his holy and beneficent government, a virtual denial of his right to command the love and obedience of his creatures, a violation of the most sacred and inviolable obligations, and a disparagement of the great and glorious perfections of God. On these grounds alone its evil and turpitude are incalculably great, and is deserving of an everlasting punishment.

In the sufferings and death of Christ we have exhibited to us a most impressive manifestation of the infinite evil of sin; a comment upon those declarations of scripture in which it is represented as the abominable thing which God hateth; and as incurring the wrath which he has denounced against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Behold the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, or on the cross, suffering for sins, the just for the unjust:—hear him express in the memorable words with which all are familiar, the absence of the light of his Father's countenance;—and have we not in the mysterious scene an awful proof of the evil of sin, and of God's irreconcilable hatred to it? Who can conceive the evil of that, the expiation of which required the Lord of glory, in the form of a

servant, to tabernacle among men; which rendered it necessary that He who was rich in the possession of uncreated and created fulness, should become poor; that he who had all happiness should become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and that the Prince of life should humble himself to the painful and ignominious death of the cross? How fearfully great is the punishment which sin deserves when in order to our deliverance from it, God inflicted it upon his own Son! If we could not have escaped from the curse of the law, unless he had redeemed us from it by being made a curse for us, surely all our conceptions of the exceeding evil and demerit of sin must be inadequate to the amount of the dreadful reality. May we not say in the words of our Lord, "If these things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Hence the penitence and deep humility of every disciple of Christ. The refuge to which he has fled for safety is of a character to remind him of his desert as a sinner, of the thraldom from which he has been rescued, and of the storm of divine wrath to which he had been exposed. The more he contemplates the Saviour in his sufferings, and the more intimate he becomes with the nature and designs of his death, the more he advances in true lowliness of mind, in holy tenderness of conscience, in deadness to the pleasures and ambition of the world, and in devotedness to the fear and the glory of God.

"If it be proper for a guilty creature to lie in the dust before his offended Creator; if the honour of the divine character deserve the first and highest regard; if moral evil be the greatest of all evils, and require, even where it is forgiven, a strong expression of divine displeasure against it; and if its pernicious influence be such that if suffered to operate according to its native tendency, it would dethrone the Almighty, and desolate the universe; the doctrine in question must accord with the plainest dictates of reason."* Nor is this remark inconsistent with another observation of the same author, that "the atonement of Christ affords a display of justice on too large a scale, and on too humbling a principle, to approve itself to a contracted, selfish, and haughty mind."

Thus, it appears, that the doctrine of the Atonement is most reasonable; that it is suited to the nature and condition of man; and worthy of the character and government of God. It fully maintains the claims of his justice and law, and exhibits these in their high and uncompromising authority. It establishes the unalterable and eternal principles of moral obligation. It "shows the utter impossibility of (1.) the Socinian hypothesis, which maintains the exercise of divine justice to be optional to the divine will: (2.) the Arminian hypothesis, which supposes the original law

* Fuller's Work, entitled, The Gospel its own Witness, p. 154.

of perfection to have been repealed, or lowered in its demands by divine grace; and that a mitigated or remedical law is put in its stead: (3.) the Pseudo-Calvinistic opinion, that unconverted men are under a disability or impotency, which prevents them from complying with the requirements of the divine law, any other than that which arises out of the criminal disaffection and voluntary repugnance of their own minds: and (4.) the Antinomian doctrine, that the obligation of the moral law is extinguished, with regard to believers in the gospel. Only admit the ground of the law as consisting in the highest original reason, and the reverse of all these schemes will follow by the clearest necessity: the most dreadful degree of wickedness, in the present life or in the life to come, can never relax the smallest ligament in the obligation of the sinful being to love and obey God: and the saints on earth, and the perfect spirits in heaven, now feel it, and for ever will feel it, their sweetest happiness and highest glory to be under this law. Thus is demonstrated the grand moral apophthegm so beautifully expressed by the pious and amiable Hooker: 'Of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men, and creatures of what condition so-

ever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all, with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.' Eccles. Pol. B. i. § 16."*

* Smith on the Sacrifice, &c. of Christ, p. 181.

CHAP. III.

THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

In assigning a reason for the humiliation and death of Christ, the Apostle states, that in order to save sinful men, it became the purity, glory, and majesty of God to appoint him to vicarious suffering. Mankind having sinned, the sovereignty of God alone could determine whether they were to be left to the consequences of transgression, or were to be restored to holiness and happiness. If the latter were the divine purpose, provision must have been made suited to the attainment of the end, and means were to be employed becoming the holiness, justice, and government of God. Especially must this have been the case, when it was designed not merely to rescue fallen men from ruin, but to advance them to distinguished dignity and honour. The grandeur of the plan proposed, embracing the manifestation of God's glory, and the immortal good of many myriads of intelligent beings, required that the means by which it should be accomplished, should correspond to the greatness and majesty of God. These seem to be the reasons which

the Apostle has in view when he says, "We see Jesus (now crowned with glory and honour) who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."*

We are thus taught that without the sufferings of Christ, the salvation of mankind could not have been attained: that on the supposition that the latter was to be accomplished, it was necessary that the former should be endured. The necessity of the death of Christ as an atonement for sin is here strongly asserted. In what sense, and with what limitations, are we to understand this necessity, and is the doctrine capable of being fully proved and established?

The atonement of Christ, then, was not necessary on the supposition, first, that when man had sinned, the whole race had been annihilated by the power of God. That such supposition has not been realized, we know from the fact; and we might maintain the impossibility of its having been realized under the government of God, because it "implies that absolute power might be employed to counteract the demands of justice; which would be no other than making arbitrary will or mere force to be superior to the

* Heb. ii. 9, 10.

claims of rectitude and wisdom." Secondly, the atonement was not necessary on the supposition, that mankind had been left to experience all the just and natural consequences of sin. Had this been the awful result, the holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God would have remained unimpeached and glorious. Nor does it appear, thirdly, that the atonement was necessary on the supposition that the exercise of justice is optional with the Deity, or that his law can be altered, relaxed, or mitigated, either in its requirements of obedience, or in its penal sanctions. But to admit this supposition were to admit, that the Supreme Lawgiver "had demanded more of the affections and obedience of his creatures than wisdom and equity warranted, or than he could persist in enforcing; in other terms, that his law had been imprudent and unjust, and that he was obliged to retrace his steps upon discovering their consequences."

But the atonement made by the obedience unto death of the Son of God, was indispensably necessary* on the supposition of the essential justice, and perfect

* Dr. Magee alleges that Dr. Clark and others, have imprudently used the word *necessary* in regard to the Atonement; as it is liable to be misunderstood, and furnishes matter of cavil to those who would misrepresent the whole of the doctrine. But the learned and venerable Prelate needs not be told that the difference between us and the enemies of the Deity and sacrifice of Christ, regards not words but great and important realities; and that no language which we

inviolability of the law of God; and at the same time, that sinful men were to be restored to the divine favour, to holiness, and to eternal life. This is proved and illustrated,

I. By the fact that an atonement has been made and accepted. This of itself furnishes a strong presumption that by no other means could the salvation of mankind be secured in consistency with the honour of the divine government. If the end could have been attained equally well otherwise, or if it could have been attained at all, would that infinite wisdom which does nothing in vain, have employed such extraordinary means for its accomplishment? If it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering; if this procedure was such as the honour of his greatness and of his justice required, then its adoption was necessary as it was certain. What God does on the principle of its being becoming to his character or government is necessary to be done; because a Being of almighty power,

can use, however guarded, while we firmly hold these fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, will prevent the adversaries of our faith from caviling. "A wish to soften its most pure, most wise, and most emphatic phrases, (of Scripture) by I know not what smoother ones of our own, is the part of a mind delicate to a fault, and not duly esteeming the wisdom of Sacred Scripture."—Witsius' Irenical Animadversions, p. 28.

and of perfect wisdom and holiness, cannot but do all that is suited to himself, all that is requisite to the honour of his glorious majesty.

Hence, the significancy of those representations of Scripture which intimate that human redemption is to be found alone in the atoning sacrifice of Christ,—not merely on the ground that the offering of that sacrifice was the appointment of God, or, was selected by him as one of many expedients which might have accomplished the purpose:—but because it only in the estimation of the divine wisdom was adequate to the attainment of this great object. It is there set forth as possessed of unrivalled, unapproachable excellency; as the discovery of unsearchable wisdom, as the great mystery of godliness, which furnishes matter of earnest scrutiny to angels, as that glorious plan without the contrivance and the execution of which the redemption of our souls would have ceased for ever. It was when all other methods were seen to be vain, that God laid help for us on One that is mighty, and exalted One chosen out of the people to be our Saviour. It was when every possible mode of expiation of inferior value was declared to be unworthy of the divine regard, that Christ undertook our salvation, and said, "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." It is this consideration that enhances the love of the Father in the bestowment of the unspeakable gift; of the Son in voluntarily placing him-

self between us and everlasting ruin. On this ground it is affirmed, that "there is salvation in no other, and that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

It is this view of the exclusive sufficiency of the atonement made for sin by the Son of God, and consequently of its absolute necessity to human redemption, which gives consistency and harmony to the various statements of divine revelation;—its statements concerning the perishing condition of those to whom the gospel is not communicated,—of all who do not seek and obtain an interest in Christ:—its solemn affirmation, that to God alone belongs the prerogative to save, that he only is adequate to so mighty a work, and that besides him, there is no other Saviour. In accordance with this view it teaches us, that all of the family of mankind who have been saved, or, who shall yet be saved from any age, or part of the world, obtain salvation only in the one new and living way, opened up by the blood of Jesus:—that the communication contained in the first promise, which was gradually unfolded, and became clearer and clearer till the rise of the Sun of righteousness, is substantially the same message of reconciliation which is now proclaimed in the gospel for the obedience of faith:—that the invitations by which prophets so earnestly entreated sinners to return to God, and the overtures of mercy carried by Apostles to men of all nations, were founded on the

expiatory sacrifice of the Messiah ;—and that the great multitude which no man can number, out of every people, and kindred and tongue, are pardoned on the same ground, washed from sin in the same atoning blood, clothed with the same spotless robe of righteousness, and are united by the same deep sense of obligation, and in the same ascription of praise to the Lamb that was slain.

II. The atonement made by the sufferings and death of Christ, was necessary in order to the manifestation and exercise of God's redeeming love and mercy. Those who deny the expiatory nature of the death of Christ, because, as they allege, the benignity of God disposed him to forgive the sins of his erring children without an atoning sacrifice, and because, as they affirm, the requirement of such satisfaction represents him as inexorable and implacable,—do really diminish to an incalculable degree the extent of the love of God to mankind. For, according to them, the goodness which he has shewn had no hinderances to surmount, no sacrifice to offer, no very great offences to pardon, no divine person to send : it was announced by a messenger, who though fully accredited, is no more than an ordinary and created being ; who by his life and his death did nothing more for us than Isaiah or the Apostle Paul might have done. The representation of the love of God to mankind is also greatly enfeebled by those who, though they do admit the expiatory nature of his

death, maintain that it was not essentially necessary to the salvation of mankind; but that it was optional with God to save them in this, or in any other method, with or without an atonement, as it might please him. The method actually employed was suitable, but not more suitable than others within the compass of the divine wisdom.

All such notions, set forth as they are with the professed view of exalting the mercy and compassion of God, lower them to an infinite degree beneath the reality as represented in Scripture. We are there taught to believe that God is essentially benignant and gracious, so much so, that he is emphatically declared to be love; but that as a Being of absolute perfection, who has in himself every possible excellency in the highest possible degree, and who acts in all that he does with the entire perfection of his nature, he can never act in contradiction to any one property of his glorious character; because he cannot deny himself, he cannot suffer the violation of his justice, truth, and faithfulness, he cannot do what would be unbecoming the honour of his majesty. He could not therefore extend his compassion to sinful men but in a way worthy of himself. Infinitely great as his love is, how could it be exercised in regard to them but in consistency with the claims of his holiness and justice? Who that has any conception of what the essential justice of the Ruler of the world is, can imagine that

it was possible for it to admit the salvation of mankind without a previous and adequate expression of its purity and inflexibility? Had not our rebellion and guilt raised up a barrier between the divine compassion and us, over which it could not flow till the law and authority of God were reconciled to us,—till by an awful atonement which would give glory to God in the highest, peace might be proclaimed on earth, and good-will to the children of men?

It is the nature of love to desire and to pursue the happiness of its objects: the love of God has shewn its infinite greatness in removing the hinderances to its manifestation and exercise, in fixing on the wondrous method by which to harmonise interests which were opposed and which seemed to be irreconcilable, and in finding out a channel, honourable to all the divine perfections, through which it might come and save us. So great was the love of God, and with so much delight did he contemplate this new and living way of its communication to sinful men, that the Divine Person by whose atoning death it was opened up, was as our Mediator endeared to him by the readiness of his compliance with his will in undertaking and finishing the work of human redemption. It was his love that devised, proposed, and provided for the accomplishment of the glorious scheme by which mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other. It was his love that raised up,

qualified, and sent the Saviour to redeem us, without any merit of ours, contrary to our desert, and without our solicitation: "when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine."

The medium thus found necessary for the manifestation and the exercise of the love of God to mankind is the only adequate expression of its infinite greatness. It is of a character to eclipse every other, even the brightest tokens of the divine favour, and infinitely to surpass in intrinsic value all other blessings. The benefits procured by the atonement, precious, and suitable, and most desirable as they are, do not equal in worth the best and greatest gift of God's eternal love. For this is possessed of transcendent excellency and greatness—greatness in comparison of which the whole created universe is as nothing,—excellency so divine as to render its bestowment for the redemption of sinful men the subject of astonishment and admiration. The variety and richness of the blessings communicated excite far less wonder than the unrivalled dignity and glory of the Person by whose death they have been provided; and it is he pre-eminently who is to form the theme of grateful adoration and praise through eternity. So great was the love of God, that he spared

not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: He so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. In compassion to us He laid on him our iniquity, and gave him up a sacrifice to suffering and death.

Hence in this view alone the necessity of the atonement. Without it the Almighty would have been known, indeed, by his power, wisdom, and goodness; for these perfections of his nature are proclaimed by all his works: but the greatness of his mercy, the infinitude of his love, could not have been manifested to his intelligent creatures. He would have been adored as holy, righteous, and beneficent; but the characters which he has assumed in connexion with the plan of human redemption, as the God of all grace, the God of salvation; and the discoveries which he has made of his boundless, endless love, would have remained unknown. These have been made known by means which no created being could previously have thought of; by a medium of such peculiar and transcendent excellency as to exhibit the infinity of the goodness of God. The expiatory death of Christ was necessary to manifest the glorious truth which it will always continue brightly to demonstrate, That God is Love.

III. The atonement made for sin by the sufferings and death of Christ was necessary to satisfy the justice

of God. "The same inspired word which tells us that God is love, tells us also that God is righteous who taketh vengeance. And the positions are in perfect harmony." The justice of God arises from his infinite holiness and rectitude, and consists in giving to every one his due, in rewarding those who are worthy of it, and in punishing those who deserve it. Its possession is essential to him as the Supreme Moral Governor and Judge of the universe; as it disposes him to show his abhorrence, in all the ways in which it becomes a holy, wise, and omnipotent Being to express it, against all iniquity. He is the just Lord; he will do no iniquity; every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not. So deeply engraven on the human heart is some notion of the rectitude of God, that it obtains without the light of revelation, and seems almost inseparable from the conception of the being of God. It is demonstrable by human reason that a Being of infinite perfection must be infinitely holy; that he therefore must hate sin which is opposed to the purity of his nature; that hating it, he will manifest his hatred against it; and that this manifestation will necessarily issue in the infliction of adequate punishment.

This righteousness of God, essential to his nature and government, formed a barrier to the restoration of man to the divine favour. There were reasons as numerous and weighty for the vindication of this perfection as could be urged for the manifestation of mercy.

If, without the exercise of mercy the human race must have perished, would not the honour of God be obscured without the maintenance of his justice? If the benign nature of God led him to shew compassion, his nature and his character, as the Sovereign Protector of the rights and happiness of the universe, required that he should be just and righteous: if mercy inclined to pity and forgive the offender, could not justice urge a plea of still greater weight, the honour and glory of God? Had not justice, besides, the priority, inasmuch as it was made known to man when as yet there had been no intimation of mercy? He could not therefore have exercised the one to the neglect of the claims of the other, without infringing on the immutable principles of righteousness—that is, without doing what the perfection of his nature, character, authority, and government, required him not to do. But such procedure was impossible: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

If, then, the infinite holiness of God disposes him to hate and to punish sin, if his justice require it, if his truth has declared it to be his fixed purpose to do so, if the legal constitution which he originally gave to mankind, and which is founded on unalterable obligations, has annexed to every act of transgression the penalty of death, how was it possible for sinful men to be saved till these claims had been compensated? The only language of the constitution under which

man had been placed, and which he had violated, was, "He that doeth these things shall live by them. This do, and thou shalt live. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." If it was wise and right to enact such a law, it must be wise and right to maintain it; and unless we could suppose that He who is immutable and eternal would adopt new views concerning the equity of his law, and the penal sanction annexed to it, and alter the procedure of his government accordingly, there is no possible way of escape for the sinner, but on the ground of an atonement admitted to be adequate by the Supreme Ruler and Judge. As the law of God can in no case require or sanction more than is right, its requirements and sanctions must of necessity remain always the same.

The acts of a government are generally the surest, as they are the most obvious, expressions of the views and intentions of the governors. If we apply this remark to the divine government, we shall find that every expression in Scripture, of God's supreme love to holiness, infinite abhorrence of sin, and determination to punish it, is fully sustained by his procedure towards mankind. He has, indeed, mingled much providential kindness with his judgments, because he has designs of mercy towards our race; but he has shewn by the infliction of pain, misery, and death—by the calamities with which he has so frequently visited the earth,—that

in the exercise of his justice, "Our God is a consuming fire." He has proved by evidence which cannot be controverted, because it comes home to the personal experience of all who are born to sorrow and suffering, that the wages of sin is death, and the violation of his law is sooner or later productive of the most direful consequences. There are pleading on the one side for the full execution of the law, the holiness, justice, and goodness upon which it is founded, the honour due to God's greatness and glorious Majesty, the sacredness of his authority as the only Supreme Lawgiver, the perfection and permanent efficacy of his moral government, the truth of his declarations, the order and happiness of the universe: on the other side, there is opposing these reasons for adhering to the law only the exemption of sinners from a deserved punishment. But what is this when set in opposition to the glory of his awful Majesty who inhabiteth eternity, who is not only infinitely pure, righteous, and holy, but who must ever present his government in a light that shall command the reverence of all intelligent creatures?

If, after the fall of man, God had relaxed his law in regard to its requirements of obedience, and had disregarded the fulfilment of the penal sanction which he had annexed to it, how would the failure of his word in this single instance have tended to weaken the confidence of the subjects of his government! Would it not also have vindicated that evil Spirit, who is called

the Father of lies, in the affirmation which he so boldly made—"Ye shall not surely die?" How successfully might he in future have plied his seductive arts, and urge to the neglect of precepts that might be violated, and to rebel against an authority that might be disobeyed, with impunity! If the first denunciation which had been uttered in the hearing of man had not been executed, might not the Tempter plausibly say, neither shall the second? The effect which this circumstance might have had on the allegiance, the religion, and morality of all intelligent beings—its effect in awakening doubt, in subverting confidence, and consequently in diffusing misery, would infinitely surpass calculation. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

There was a necessity, therefore, that the justice of God should be satisfied, either by dealing with the sinner according to his desert, or, by inflicting the penalty on an adequate and accepted Surety. Hence the absolute necessity of an atonement to preserve inviolate the righteousness and veracity of God, and to save man from the consequences of transgression. But it is evident that the required atonement could not have been made by any mere created being. Man could not, either by his obedience or sufferings, remove the condemnation under which his iniquity had placed him; even supposing he had been able for the future to do the will of God. "We may as well affirm," says

a learned Divine, "that our former obedience atones for our present sins, as that our present obedience makes amends for antecedent transgressions."

Though it had been possible for him to have repented sincerely of sin, it is perfectly evident that his repentance could have been no atonement to divine justice. It is not accepted by human governments as a compensation for the penalty of the law; on what ground, then, can we imagine that it might be admitted by the divine? In proportion to the infinite excellency of the Supreme Moral government, must be the value of the sacrifice necessary to vindicate its honour in the remission of sins; and the penitence of sinful man, though complete and genuine, could be no compensation for the dishonour done to God, could give no satisfaction to offended justice, nor furnish any reason why transgression should be pardoned. The penalty of the law, as set forth in the threatening, left no room for repentance; for it declared death to be the wages of sin;—a declaration which was made by Him who knows what is due to his character and government, and whose threatenings we are to regard as expressions of his will. When his authority is trampled upon, and his image effaced, he only knows what is the extent of the wrong which is done, and what the satisfaction which it becomes the glory of his Majesty to receive.

Is it further alleged that what man could not attain by his repentance, he might ultimately merit by endur-

ing penal suffering? His sufferings, though extended to eternity, are merely the sufferings of a finite being, who continues to sin as his existence is prolonged, and could not repair the injury done to the honour of God. Had it been allowed him to attempt to compensate in this way for the first transgressions, how could he atone for those sins which in the mean while he would accumulate? But it is impossible that sinful man, by his obedience or sufferings, could furnish a ground on which the Great God could declare his righteousness in the remission of sins. Nor does it appear how the services of the highest created beings could avail to his redemption. They are limited dependent creatures, whose whole obedience is due by the law of their nature, and who never can do more than what it is their duty to do. How palpably inefficacious, then, must have been the sacrifice of inferior animals to put away sin!

Indeed, it is evident that no satisfaction for sin was sufficient, or could be received, which was inferior to that actually made by the Redeemer. No atonement tendered to the Heavenly Majesty could be accepted unless it was proportionable to the wrong which had been done. Were it in any thing to come short of this, it would fall infinitely short of it; and the same reasons which rendered it necessary that satisfaction should have been made to the justice of God, rendered it necessary that what was unsuitable should have been rejected. What sacrifice of less

value than the atoning death of Christ could have attained all the ends for which satisfaction for one sin was necessary? But there was expiation to be made for the guilt of myriads of intelligent beings who had rebelled against God, who had virtually dishonoured his government, who had perverted their faculties, and had morally incapacitated themselves for the great purposes of their creation. It was, therefore, worthy of God to procure, and to accept of, the sacrifice of his own Son; it became him in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

These views are in perfect accordance with the natural feelings and moral sentiments of mankind, as was shewn in the preceding chapter. "If it be meant," says Adam Smith, "that vice does not appear to the Deity to be, for its own sake, the object of abhorrence and aversion, and what for its own sake, it is fit and right should be punished, the truth of this maxim can, by no means, be so easily admitted. If we consult our natural sentiments, we are apt to fear, lest before the holiness of God, vice should appear to be more worthy of punishment, than the weakness and imperfection of human nature can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow creatures, he may often

justly elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a Being, he can scarce imagine, that his littleness and weakness should ever seem to be the proper object, either of esteem or of reward. But he can easily conceive, how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the object of aversion and punishment; neither can he see any reason why the divine indignation should not be let loose without any restraint, upon so vile an insect, as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he cannot demand it from the *justice*, but that he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition, at the thought of his past conduct, are, upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and seem to be the only means which he has left for appeasing the wrath which, he knows, he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears, lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime, by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before

the purity of the divine justice can be *reconciled* to his manifest offences.

" The doctrines of Revelation coincide, in every respect, with those original anticipations of nature; and, as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they shew us, at the same time, that the most powerful intercession has been made, and the most dreadful atonement has been paid for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."*

By the infinitely valuable and efficacious atonement which God has provided, his truth in fulfilling the threatening of his law is displayed, and manifested more impressively than if it had been executed on the actual offenders:—his goodness, in its varied forms of grace, mercy, and compassion, is gloriously exhibited;—his justice, in not removing the condemnation of his law without a satisfaction infinitely surpassing in value all that could be rendered by the obedience and sufferings of all creatures united;—his holiness in expressing so strongly his abhorrence of sin, and in not admitting man into communion with him till justified by the death, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Does not the Saviour allude to this manifestation of the divine character and perfections, when he says in regard to himself, " I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salva-

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, first edition, pp. 204—206.

tion; I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation." Here then is an atonement for sin made by the sufferings and death of Christ, infinitely worthy of God to provide and to receive, by which every restraint on his mercy is removed, every claim of his justice honoured, and which forms an ample ground, on account of which God offers pardon and reconciliation to the whole world. The edict of the Eternal and Immortal King is promulgated, and its language is addressed to every creature, "Look unto me, and be saved.—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

IV. The atonement was necessary in consideration of the greatness of the blessings which God had designed to bestow on mankind. It is partly, at least, to this circumstance that the Apostle refers, when he says, that "it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It is the purpose of God not merely to rescue his people from the consequences of the fall, but to raise them to distinguished honour, and to put them in possession of immortal glory and felicity. The first blessing bestowed in this endless train of benefits, the free and full forgiveness of all sin, is of incalculable value. Its worth is to be estimated

by the infinite greatness of the God who blots out transgression, and the everlasting happiness of which the nature of man is capable. But what would be the consequence could we suppose a publication of mercy and of forgiveness made to mankind, without any expression of God's abhorrence of sin, or any atonement to satisfy his justice? Could that government be respected that would establish it by law, that whosoever offended, if they only repented, would not be punished, but be treated with the same favour as though they were innocent? If, notwithstanding the severity of divine justice so awfully displayed in the atonement of the cross, so many encourage themselves in sin, from the hope that grace may abound; what would have been the views of mankind if the offer of pardon had been made to all, without any previous manifestation of the evil of sin, or of God's determination to punish it?

The greatness of that love with which God loved the world, and the magnitude of the blessings which in consequence he intended for his people, rendered it proper and becoming in him to bestow them on the ground of a righteousness and atonement of corresponding extent and magnitude. It was not merely the removal of the curse, and all the consequences of everlasting misery resulting from it;—it was not merely the bestowment of pardon on millions of guilty creatures, and the establishment of a permanent eco-

nomy of mercy by which forgiveness and reconciliation might be proclaimed by law to the end of time ;—these were only what may be termed the negative benefits procured by the sacrifice of Christ,—benefits which are preliminary to the communication of blessings of the highest magnitude and of eternal duration. It was designed that sinners should be made righteous as well as pardoned, that they should be accepted, as well as made acceptable, in the Beloved ; that they should be beautified by his righteousness, and sanctified and adorned by his Spirit ; that they should stand in a new and endearing relation to God, have him peculiarly for their Father and portion, and be possessors of an incorruptible and eternal inheritance. Hence Christ gave himself for the church, not merely that he might sanctify and cleanse it, but that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Contemplate the value and the magnitude of the blessings of which man is a partaker when he believes in Christ, and to which he becomes an heir. He is made the righteousness of God in him,—is adopted into his family, has the spirit and the privileges of adoption conferred upon him ;—is no longer treated as a stranger and foreigner, but as a sharer of the discipline and enjoyments of the members of God's household ;—is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and is fitted for forming a

part in that glorious edifice of which Christ is the chief corner stone. He is brought into close relationship to the Saviour,—quickened together with him, and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: with him he is to inherit all things, to be the object of God's peculiar love and complacency, and to enjoy with him the kingdom which it is the Father's good pleasure to give him. His high honours and privileges are summed up by the Apostle, when he says, addressing believers in Christ, "Whether the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Was it not becoming and proper, and, therefore, necessary, that the Great Lord and Ruler of all should bestow blessings of such vast worth and magnitude, on guilty and rebellious creatures, only as the fruit of a mediation and atonement that were in every way adequate,—that visibly came up to the standard of boundless perfection,—and whose infinite efficacy was capable of reconciling earth and heaven? Was it not meet that there should be some proportion between the greatness of the happiness and glory to which sinful men are to be advanced and the merit of Him through whom they are saved; so that God's abhorrence of sin might be impressively displayed by the very medium through which it is forgiven? Such procedure was surely becoming the greatness and glory of God.

He has accordingly provided an atonement of such boundless value that he may in perfect consistency with his character fulfil in regard to the objects of his redeeming love, all the good pleasure of his goodness. Every benefit which an omnipotent and compassionate God can design for them, may be communicated without any hinderance. However high the superstructure is raised to the praise of free and sovereign grace, the mediatorial work of Christ forms a foundation which amply supports it in harmony with the attributes and government of God. What degrees of advancement in glory and felicity may not they experience who are redeemed by an atonement of infinite value? The first blessing conferred far outstrips in worth all that can afterwards be bestowed. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

We are to reflect, that whatever blessings we receive from Christ as our Pattern, Guide, and Leader, we derive in consequence of his expiatory sufferings. Unless he had suffered for sins the just for the unjust, the constitution of his mediatorial character, and the incalculable benefits which it conveys, could have had no existence. We should have wanted all the encouragement and comfort which the example of our Forerunner in tribulation is calculated to give us; and we should in that case not have the privilege which we now enjoy, of looking, amid the trials and

sorrows of life, unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame. As it is, the sons of God are conducted to glory by a Leader and Commander who has been consecrated to his office by suffering, who is qualified to discharge it with matchless tenderness, fidelity, and success, who adapts his compassionate care to the various degrees of their infirmity, affliction, and helplessness, who rules in the strength of the Lord God, and in the majesty of the name of his God. They know that he sympathizes with their grief, for he himself bore their griefs, and carried their sorrows;—that his acquaintance with all their weaknesses and wants is complete, because he watches over them every moment, and keeps them night and day;—that he is able to relieve and save them, because he has been constituted by their Supreme Ruler and Judge, the Captain, the Prince of their salvation;—and that he will not fail nor forsake them, because he has promised to be with them always, and to give them eternal life.

Nor is his entrance into glory in virtue of that perfect oblation which he presented unto God, less calculated to animate their hopes and increase their joy. He entered into the grave, despoiled death of its power, rose triumphantly as the Saviour of the world, ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. He has taught his followers to feel assured that neither death nor life

can separate them from his love; that death is deprived of its sting, and the grave of its victory; and that over all the temptations and enemies by which they are beset in this mortal state, they shall be made more than conquerors. Who can doubt the completeness of the atonement, since, in reward of his sufferings, he is so highly exalted; or, whether every barrier to our immortal felicity and glory be taken out of the way, whether the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and that was contrary to us, is cancelled and nailed to the cross, whether the way into the holiest be opened up by the blood of Jesus? Who can doubt whether heaven with all its mansions be secured for all who receive the reconciliation, or, whether God the Judge of all, by the high honour he has conferred on the Saviour and Friend of sinners, has shewn that his truth is fulfilled, his justice satisfied, his law magnified, and that his mercy and grace are to be exercised freely and munificently through Jesus Christ unto life eternal?

We cannot estimate the value of these great and manifold blessings. Is it not suitable to their variety and greatness that they should come to us through an atonement of infinite worth? Is not this procedure worthy of the wisdom and goodness as well as justice of God; and most suited to the weaknesses, infirmities, and necessities of man? How much calculated is this to relieve the penitent from his fears, to heal

the broken in heart, to give comfort to all who mourn; to inspire the mind with humble confidence in the God of mercy, with trust in him for all the good which he has promised. We cannot doubt that he whose love has provided so costly a sacrifice is our Friend; that he who withheld not his own Son will give us grace and glory; and that since the primary gift is of far greater value than all created being, there may follow it a series of interpositions and gracious communications of surprising magnitude. It is when the present scene has passed away, and when we are admitted into the paradise of God, that we shall be able to take a survey, more comprehensive and adequate, of the fruits of the Saviour's sufferings. The survey will never fail to awaken our gratitude and praise to him who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and who has made us kings and priests to God and his Father.

But of all the honours which the God of all grace confers upon man, the greatest and the most astonishing is real and indissoluble union to Christ. When we reflect upon the nature of this high distinction;—a distinction incomparably more elevated than that of our original creation,—a distinction more peculiar and endearing than any bestowed upon angels,—we are lost in the contemplation of the dignity and glory to which human nature is hereafter to be advanced. This nature is now in the person of Jesus Christ on the

throne of the universe; far above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, either in this world, or in that which is to come: and it shall through eternity exist in the case of every believer in visible union to the Redeemer, in resemblance to his glorious image, as the purchase of his precious blood, and the trophy of his redeeming grace and power. This is the dignity and honour to which all the children of God are raised,—and dignity of which each is the possessor and the heir who passes the verge of nominal Christianity,—and who is called out of darkness into marvellous light. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

In this wonderful dispensation which we are considering, the interest of penitents is inseparably linked to that of their Redeemer; and included in the reward merited by him, and conferred on him. "All the regard is had to penitents, and all the benefits heaped upon them that could be desired or proposed on any scheme: and yet, at the same time, the ends of government are fully maintained, and the honour of God, and the majesty of truth, preserved inviolate."*

* Balguy on Redemption, p. 89.

CHAP. IV.

THE PRACTICAL TENDENCY OF THE ATONEMENT.

It has often been urged as an objection to Christianity, that while it professes to make provision for the purification of human nature, its peculiar and characteristic doctrines, if fully believed and acted upon, render such provision of none effect. It is alleged that if our own personal merit be excluded from forming any part of the ground of our justification, the most powerful motives to virtuous action, are, in a great measure, divested of their efficacy. This method of curing the malady of our nature confirms and aggravates, it is maintained, the original disease.

Various answers have been given to this objection, some of which, the inspired penmen do not sanction. While some persons have boldly attempted to explain away the doctrine of salvation by grace, by alleging that the justification of man in the sight of his Maker is procured by the combined efficacy of his own works and the merits of Christ; others, assuming the truth of this notion, have reckoned it expedient to allude very seldom to the apostolical doctrine concerning jus-

tification, and of appending to it, when mentioned, unauthorised limitations. The inspired teachers of Christianity pursue a different course: they uniformly affirm, that man is justified by faith in Christ, without the deeds of the law; and yet, they show that the believer thus justified is brought under the influence of principles and motives which are productive of purity of heart and of life; that the doctrine in question is so far from being prejudicial to the interests of morality, that man cannot be truly holy till he humbly accepts of the righteousness which is of God by faith; and that in place of making void by this means the authority and obligation of the law, the commanding power of the law is in this way established.

The truth of this statement is proved by facts;—facts which have accompanied the progress of Christianity from its earliest promulgation. Are not they who rely most entirely on the atonement of Christ for acceptance with God, uniformly the most fearful of sin, and the most humble, circumspect, and upright in their lives? Are they not often charged with being even righteous over much? Are they not exemplary in religiously educating their families, sanctifying the sabbath, in doing justly, in loving mercy, and in walking humbly with God? Have they not in every age been most attentive to all the claims of justice and humanity? They were most firm adherents of the doctrine of gratuitous justification, who in recent times,

visited the prisons of Europe, plunged into its dungeons, and took the gauge of human misery, for the purpose of alleviating it.

"There is nothing wonderful or unaccountable in this: it is the natural effect of their belief. For they, of all men, have the liveliest conviction of the responsibility, danger, and lamentable consequences of sin. Others may hesitate, and do hesitate, to admit the certainty of its condemnation. But they who believe in the sacrifice of Christ have the clearest apprehension and assurance of this truth. Nothing can make so certain the punishment, which, if indulged, it will hereafter incur, as the punishment which it has actually incurred. In proportion, therefore, as a man's views of the atonement are clear, his abhorrence and dread of opposing the divine will are sincere and operative. The Cross of Christ is at once a refuge in which his conscience may find shelter, and a beacon holding forth to him a constant warning against the carelessness, the errors, and the corruptions of the world."*

In the first place, faith in the atonement of Christ, in order to acceptance with God, is preceded and accompanied by a conviction of the excellency and authority of the law of God. That such conviction must exist previously to the reception of the remedy offered in the gospel, is clear from this, that it is the design of the dispensation of mercy to redeem from

* Sumner.

the penalty of transgression. In what way can the law shut us up to the faith, and act as our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, but by shewing us the purity and righteousness of God, and impressing our hearts with a sense of our great demerit before him? It was the law that made known to man at first the rule of his obedience, and the terms on which he was to inherit eternal life; and it is this which in the order and nature of things must still be first pressed upon the conscience to shew what the moral government of God requires, and the fearful malediction entailed by a single act of transgression. When it comes with power to the heart, it produces such conviction of guilt and danger as will urge to the most earnest inquiry for relief. The convinced sinner has his eyes opened to see his condemnation under the curse of the violated law; and has such deep impressions of its unalterable obligation that he despairs of deliverance from himself. In this undone condition the gospel makes known to him the remedy; a salvation of God's providing, divinely adapted to the circumstances of man, and which meets his necessities.

But surely that law by means of which he arrived at the full conviction of his need of a Saviour, can never appear to him in any other light than as holy, just, and good. Having been led by deep conviction of its immutable authority to feel the impossibility of his obtaining justification before God on the ground of his obedience, must he not always regard it as the rule

of his life which he is imperiously bound to observe, and as the standard to which it is his duty to aspire? His conviction of the excellency of the law, as a transcript of the divine character, and as a perfect rule of righteousness, must be strengthened by every view which he can take of the substitution and death of the Redeemer. He sees that its prohibitions are against all sin; and that it requires from all intelligent creatures every possible act of righteousness. To be released from such a law were it possible, would be a release from conformity to the moral character of God, and from that moral purity in which his image consists. On the supposition that such release were possible, what would be the end accomplished by the gospel? Not surely our redemption from all iniquity, and our being made unto God a peculiar people zealous of good works.

In the second place, the gospel does not mitigate the perfect requirements of the law as a rule of life. Its disciples, on the contrary, are as much the subjects of the supreme moral government of God, as they were previously to their reliance on the atonement of the Redeemer. There is, indeed, no condemnation to them; but it is only in proportion as they obey all God's commandments, that they have evidence of being in this state of safety. How can they ascertain their discipleship, but by their conformity to that law which is the only infallible rule of obedience? Is it not

declared in that book which they receive as a revelation from God, "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.—Let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."*

Does not the law of God oblige man to love Him who is infinitely lovely, as well as boundless in his beneficence, after he has become the object of pardoning mercy as much as before. While the gospel discovers the way in which God forgives sins consistently with his justice, it makes no change in the nature of things. The moral character of God remaining the same, his law must continue the same also; and by no possible circumstances can we cease to be bound to give to God entire obedience. The proof of our sincerity, and consequently of our safety, is an habitual endeavour to meet its requirements. "Not as though I had already attained," said the Apostle Paul, "either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

* Matth. vii. 21; 1 John iii. 7—11.

This was he who exercised himself in maintaining a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man; who had so lively a perception of the imperfection of his best duties and services, as to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"*

In the third place, it is because the obligation and requirements of the law are unalterable, that the obedience and sufferings of Christ were necessary, before God could extend pardoning mercy to mankind. But for his holiness and justice why might not mercy have been proclaimed without an atonement? Or, why was an atonement of infinite value required? It became Him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, it was worthy of the glory of his character and government, in converting rebels into sons, and in raising them to immortal happiness, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. As it became Him to do this, the doing of it was absolutely necessary. The fact proves that it was so: for we cannot believe it possible that the only wise God would have proposed so costly a sacrifice, by giving up his beloved Son to the death of the Cross, if the redemption of the world could have been attained in any other way.

Why was it not possible to attain it in any other way? Because the authority of the law which had

* Rom. vii. 24.

been slighted by the rebellion of man, must, before this rebellion could have been expiated, be magnified and made honourable; and his justice must have been vindicated while his mercy was exalted. Had the moral law been an institution issuing from mere arbitrary appointment, the same Almighty power which gave it existence could have set it aside: but being eternal and unchangeable as the character of Him of which it is the transcript, its obligation and requirements could no more be altered or lowered than God could change from being what he essentially is, holy, just, and good. The perfection of the law which is the expression of his own moral perfection, formed a barrier between God the Righteous Ruler, and man the guilty subject; and in no way could it be removed but by that wonderful plan which the wisdom of God devised, by which the divine attributes shine forth with fullest radience and glory. He who is the Image of the Invisible God became the subject of the law; he perfectly obeyed all its precepts, and endured its penalty. He stood in the room of sinful men, and for their sake, and in obedience to the command of his Father, he submitted to death, even the death of the cross. How could the unalterable obligation of the law be taught to the universe by more awfully impressive means? In what other way could the evil and the heinousness of the slightest violation of the law be so fully shewn? An event deeply affecting, and which

fills heaven and earth with amazement, proves that God is the irreconcilable enemy of sin, and that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands.

If Christ has declared that one jot or tittle of the law shall not pass, and if his work be a comment on his declaration, how can any presume to think of lowering or of nullifying this standard of perfection? What person whose heart is right with God would desire any one of its requirements changed or suppressed, or wish release from the obligation of full conformity? Justification by faith in the redemption of Christ, is so far from making void the law, that it enforces and establishes its authority, and makes way for the fulfilment of its righteousness in us by the sanctification of the Spirit. The grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world. The design of Christ's death is to redeem us from all iniquity, to purify us unto himself, and make us a people zealous of good works,—that we might show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

In the fourth place, the atonement of Christ presents the most powerful motives to obedience, and in this way establishes the commanding authority of the law. It is impossible for men, while conscious of guilt, and dreading the divine displeasure, to view with

delight and complacency the character of God as the Supreme Moral Governor and Legislator. Unless reconciliation, as exhibited in the gospel, is effected, they may perhaps be induced through fear to give constrained obedience to the precepts of the law; but such obedience, forced and feigned as it is, merits not the name, and cannot be acceptable to God. It is only they who entirely rely upon Christ, and who rest their hopes of salvation upon his mediatorial work, who delight in the law of the Lord, who love its divine Author, who have the highest satisfaction and enjoyment in meditating upon it, and in making it the rule of their walk of holiness.

What principle operates so powerfully on man, or so effectually excites him to the practice of duty, as gratitude? This affection when ardent gives an energy to the mind, an elevation to the whole character which easily surmounts every opposing obstacle. But who can feel the debt of obligation so deeply as those who are sensible that they are not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which have been shewn them; and who look for eternal life, not as the reward of personal merit, but as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Who can be so capable of feeling the value of the great salvation, as they who are convinced that without it they are under condemnation, and must have remained in a helpless and hopeless condition? Can they ever cease to feel and

to show their thankfulness and love who have some experience of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, who know the evil and the fearful consequences of sin; the claims of that divine justice which they had provoked, and which could not be compromised; the numerous barriers which were in the way of their restoration to the favour of God, but which are now removed by the gracious interposition of the God of mercy? Does not every circumstance unite in the redemption in Christ Jesus which is calculated to awaken, and to keep alive, the affection of gratitude, and the expression of praise? The inquiries spontaneously arise, what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us? How can we sufficiently show our abhorrence of that iniquity which he hates, and our love to that holiness in which he delights? When he has bestowed such great mercies upon us, shall not we present ourselves living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service? "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him who died for them, and who rose again."

If gratitude to God for blessings undeserved, unlooked for, and unspeakably great,—blessings which have been procured by a price of infinite value,—be a

most efficient principle in leading to universal obedience, then, surely they who receive justification gratuitously by faith in the Redeemer are in the possession of it. Our Lord has illustrated the power and operation of this principle in the following beautiful parable: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he said, Master, say on. A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty: and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned unto the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house,—thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."*

The disciples of Christ are assured not merely that much has been forgiven them, but that they have obtained this forgiveness by the most wonderful means,

* Luke chap. vii.

—by the humiliation and death of him who though he was rich, for our sake made himself poor,—who with the most disinterested generosity took our help upon him, assumed the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Can they ever think of his love, and of their own unworthiness, of the blessings which he has procured, and the misery from which he has delivered them, without being most willingly led to run in the way of the commandments, and to consecrate themselves to the fear and glory of God? The commanding power of the principles by which they are actuated was shewn in the lives of the Apostles,—in the virtues of the many thousands whom they were instrumental in converting to the faith of the gospel;—in the zeal, the purity, the active and persevering benevolence of the great multitudes, who in every age trusted to the mediation of Christ alone for acceptance with God. In the nature of things, love to the law and the character of God, and gratitude to the Redeemer, must have an improving,—I may call it, an assimilating—effect on our hearts and lives.

Besides, the gratitude which the gospel produces is always connected with reverence and godly fear. The light in which God has manifested himself in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, is fitted to awe as well as to cheer the soul. He has shewn himself to be the God of love; but he has, at the same

time, given a demonstration of his holiness and justice. It is of the same Great and Invisible God it is declared, that he delighteth in mercy, and that his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness; that he pardoneth iniquity, and yet, that to all who continue in its practice, he is a consuming fire; that he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and yet, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. Are not these characters in harmonious combination displayed in the cross of Christ? Do we not there behold free and unbounded mercy exercised to the sinner, and unsparing wrath exhibited against sin; eternal love conferring a gift of transcendent value, and justice, by the most awful infliction, vindicating its own honours? Hence the union of fear and love in the heart of every penitent,—an union which is maintained by every view of the divine character, by the promises and threatenings, the invitations and warnings, of the Holy Scriptures; an union which exerts a happy influence in invigorating all the christian virtues and graces, and in producing those apparently opposite dispositions which characterize the humble, watchful, blameless, resigned, and spiritually-minded disciple of Christ.

While his transgressions are pardoned, he is at the same time reminded, that the wages of sin is death,—that this death was inflicted in all its bitterness on his Divine Surety,—and that in no way can he escape

final condemnation but by continuing in the faith and holiness of the gospel unto the end. "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." The perversion or abuse of the gospel, we are expressly assured, will be visited with severer punishment than that which will fall on the transgressors of the law. "This is the condemnation, that light is come unto the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

In mentioning the motives which a gratuitous salvation presents to the practice of universal holiness, we must not omit the new relation or connexion which it constitutes between God and his people. They are his, as the creatures of his power, and the recipients of his providential bounty; but they become to him a peculiar people, a purchased possession, and in an elevated sense, his sons and daughters, by the redemption of Christ. Hence the frequency with which they are reminded of this new relation as a cogent reason why they should aim at a resemblance to the moral image of that holy God whose they are, and whom they serve. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.—Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a

peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Numerous are the exhortations in the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, addressed to believers, in which their obligation to follow holiness, arising from the relation in which they stand to God, are urged on their attention. They are represented as closely united to the Son of God, the Captain of their salvation, as the temples of the Holy Ghost, as delivered from this present evil world, and as heirs of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away: so that on the ground of consistency it becomes them to depart from all iniquity, to abstain from the very appearance of evil, and to be holy even as God is holy. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth."*

In the fifth place, the atonement of Christ opens up a way for the free and abundant communication of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and, consequently, provides for such renovation of the nature of man as will

* Col. iii. 1—4.

fit him for dwelling in the presence of a holy God. Is not every legal hinderance removed that would render it unbecoming the Supreme Ruler and Majesty of the universe to hold gracious intercourse with rebellious subjects? May not the Holy Lord God consistently with the glories of his character and moral government, return in mercy and loving kindness to every sincere penitent that unites himself by faith to Christ? If he himself formed the plan of redemption, and accomplished it by the obedience and sufferings of his own Son, for the purpose of conveying, not merely pardon, but life, purity, and happiness, surely these blessings are actually possessed by all who really believe in Jesus. To be in Christ, interested in his salvation, and to continue at the same time in the practice of sin, are states which cannot exist together.

The bestowment of divine influence is represented in Scripture as the immediate effect of an interest in the mediation of the Redeemer. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,—that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."* Is it possible that those whom the Holy Spirit renews and sanctifies should be remiss in the practice of holiness? It is in regard to them that the promises are made; "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts:—I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and

* Gal. iii. 13, 14.

from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."* How can they in whom these declarations are fulfilled, (and on the supposition of the truth and divine authority of the Bible, they are fulfilled in *all* who truly believe in Christ,) live in the practice of known sin? Can they be in a state of friendship with God, and at the same time be allowed to remain under the dominion of sin which he hates? Can they be members of God's redeemed family, and yet not bear his image? Can they be the subjects of the Spirit's renovating influence, the temples of the Holy Ghost, and not bring forth the love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, which are his fruits? "Reckon ye yourselves," says the Apostle, addressing believers, "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. For sin shall not have dominion over you."†

As it is by the death of his Son that sinful men are reconciled unto God, so it is by faith in the same atoning death that their nature is purified, and that

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25—30. † Rom. vi. 13, 14.

holiness is cherished and practised. It is not till man gives the affectionate confidence of his heart to the God of salvation, or, in other words, relies on the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance, that he becomes a new creature, and yields a voluntary obedience unto God. A heavenly principle is then implanted, which controls and regulates his affections and desires; which leads him to trust to the truth and faithfulness of God; and to delight in the doing of his will. His displeasure is dreaded as the greatest evil, and the apprehension of it operates as an incentive to the habitual relinquishment of all ungodliness and unrighteousness. It is faith in the Redeemer that alone accomplishes a thorough reformation on the life,—that purifies the character of the outward man by first renovating the inner,—and that brings all the threatenings and promises, the hopes and precepts of divine revelation to bear in producing the fruits of new obedience. It places the soul in the attitude of the deepest lowliness and humility, of concern to know, and readiness to obey the will of God. The attention of the believer is directed to himself, to his principles, dispositions, and conduct; and we cannot give him credit for the sincerity of his repentance, and the reality of his faith, unless from the hour of his professed conversion he ceases to do evil, and learns to do well. From this period there will be a change visible in his character: if he formerly was intem-

perate, he now becomes sober; if turbulent or oppressive, he now does violence to no man, neither does he accuse any falsely; if selfish and uncharitable, he learns to be kind to others, and to give of his substance to him that needeth; if an extortioner, he begins to exact no more than is due; and if faithless in respect to the relative duties, he studies with his whole heart to do what is just, and true, and honest, and lovely, and of good report.

These are the immediate and the necessary effects of faith in the atoning sacrifice of Him who died to redeem us from all iniquity. These fruits it produces by the most awakening and impressive means,—by reminding us of the wages of sin as exhibited in the death of the Redeemer, and by presenting his sufferings as powerful motives to all holy obedience. It alone secures effectually the interests of morality, and the honour of the law; as it brings the thoughts and affections of the heart into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This is the uniform representation of Scripture; and all have it in their power to ascertain the truth of this representation by observing facts. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," says the Apostle, "but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs accord-

ing to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that those affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."*

It were easy to prove, by the most incontestable evidence, that it is the doctrine of the Cross alone which obtains the victory over the corruption which is in man, and which is in the world. We might appeal to facts, numerous and undeniable, for the confirmation of this position. But in order to do any measure of justice to this view of our subject, it would be necessary to go over a field on which it is impossible for us at present to enter. We shall therefore conclude with the words of the Apostle: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.—By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."†

* Titus iii. 5—9. † 1 John v. 1—6.

THE END.

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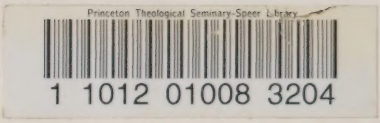
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